Regis Regd 1827

THE

MISERIES OF AN HEIRESS.

A NOVEL.

1016

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

1016

BY

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AUTHOR OF

SIR OWEN GLENDOWR; THE ASSASSIN OF ST. GLENROY; LOVE, MYSTERY, AND MISERY, &c.

I boast no tale in magic wonders rife;
But yet familiar, is there nought to prize,
O, Nature! in thy bosom-scenes of life?

CAMPBELL.

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MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL, THE TANJORE.

1016

THE

MISERIES OF AN HEIRESS.

CHAP. I.

But nature never fram'd a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff.
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprising what they look on————
————She cannot love,
Nor take no shape, nor project of affection.

SHAKESPEARE.

The evil Genius.

THE breakfast equipage was yet on the table, and the trio still engaged in its service, when a servant entered, and delivered a note to Lady Zitella Herbert; the seal

was a coronetted lozenge, and it proved to be from the Dowager Countess of Darnford, the widow of the predecessor of the last deceased Earl.

Our heroine had been personally made known to this Lady during her short *séjour* with her father, and had, even as a child, received from her both notice and attention; she therefore felt pleased that her note conveyed intimation of an early visit from her Ladyship. Zitella handed it to her uncle, while she verbally acquainted Mrs. Nugent with its contents, with a smile of satisfaction, we must confess, rather the offspring of pride than of individual regard to the Countess, as she felt truly rejoiced at the recognition of one relation, whose attention would relieve her from the mortifying circumstance of being wholly under the auspices of a woman so vulgar and illiterate as the wife of her uncle.

Nugent's face displayed that crimson, which it never failed to exhibit, when either

1016

either annoyed or agitated: he twisted the note into a thousand folds, insensible of the action, and then hastily said—"I have ordered the carriage at one, Fanny, as you wished to make an excursion to some of the various exhibitions of the morning. I have arranged for devoting this to your service, and shall be ready to attend you at that hour."

"Oh dear! I will stay at home with pleasure, that Zitella may see her friend," good-naturedly returned Fanny.

"There is no necessity for that, which I can divine," said her husband, in a tone somewhat ruffled.

"Certainly not; for the execution of Mrs. Nugent's kind proposal," rejoined Zitella, "such a sacrifice of amusement is not requisite: if you, therefore, my dear Madam, will receive my apologies for non-attendance to-day, I will be at your devotion on any other."

"To be sure, niece, I will," cried Mrs. Nugent, who was particularly proud of ap-

plying a term, not equally consonant to the inclinations of her new connexion. "As this friend of yours is a Countess, and I know what great folks require, for one of 'em lived in a castle just by Farmer Dobbins, so I'm noed to them, and to my thinking, it would not be polite for me to pop out, just as she pops in; for I remember when Giles ran in one day, all out of breath, and told us the housekeeper was a-coming down the hill, with a message from her lady, about some spruce beer as we had sent up as a present, why, there was such a hurry and such a scurry, Jenny Dobbins and I did not feel comfortable again for a week, we were put so out of sorts, as a body may say."

"And I say there is no necessity to remain at home; hang Lady Darnford! she is fated to be my evil genius, and torment me in every shape."

"Mercy defend us!" exclaimed Mrs. Nugent, resting her elbows on the breakfast-table; "why, is she a witch? a vile contriver

contriver of mischief? I remember, when they wanted to try, in our village, whether Dame Widgets could swim, they were going to souse her over head and ears in our horse-pond, if it had not been for Parson Norris, for that's the way to be certain and sure of 'em; and so as they could not dip her, why, they burnt her in FG; and, Lard love ye, if you suspect her of being such a sort of a person, I would not stay in the house, no, not I, for all the world!"

Nugent bit his lip, and moved the spoon from the cup to the saucer, and the saucer to the cup, in endless succession, while Zitella, truly feeling for his mortification, turned towards him, saying—"Indeed, my dear Sir, I had no idea of your entertaining personal dislike to Lady Darnford; but, as this is the case, do not suffer consideration for me to influence your admission of an objectionable visitor beneath your roof."

"So much the better you did not

 know

know it," continued Nugent, with encreased embarrassment; "but *hateful* as I confess she is to me, *you* must still admit her; I by no means wish you to reject her advances, for to *you* she will doubtless prove an eligible and useful friend; but for Mrs. Nugent"——and he hesitated, "it is not essential; and it is therefore my desire she may avoid her altogether, as much as possible."

"Dear Hubby, you need not say so much about it, nor look so out of sorts, for I am frightened to death at her already; I would not give her a word—no, not *one*, I promise you; and when I see her, I will be as dumb as a grave-stone, aye, and more so too, for that tells what is within, and I assure you I won't."

"Pray, Fanny," cried the tormented Nugent, "cease speaking of her at all. I tell you, I hate, detest her; and the continuance of a theme so much at war with my feelings, is unpleasant. Lady Zitella will adjourn, to wait the approach of Lady Darnford,

Darnford, while you equip yourself for our drive; and I," added he, rising, "will draw on my boots to attend you."

He quitted the room as Mrs. Nugent exclaimed—"Well, this is the oddest whim I ever heard in my life. *I hate her, detest her;* yet Zitella must not reject her advances; she is a proper friend for her, but not for you, so avoid her;—why, if she is a proper friend for one woman, why the deuce shouldn't she be for another?"

"The prohibition is rather a singular one, certainly," said her companion, smiling, "for I should really have conceived, in this respect, we might have here associated together; but it is in vain we attempt to develop the cause, and my uncle evidently cannot bear to be probed on this subject; it were therefore best that we repress curiosity, and leave the solution of the enigma to the future."

"Still it plagues me very much to know what it all means," returned the other;

"and I am determined to try if I can't pump it out in our morning ride; but, Lord! the time-piece says it is already past twelve—so good bye, dear niece, and take care of yourself with the old witch." Thus saying, Mrs. Nugent made her exit, and in a few minutes entered the carriage with her husband, all gaiety and mirth, whilst our heroine soon after retired to her own room, to make some arrangement in her dress, in compliment to her expected guest.

In a short period, the barouche of the Countess of Darnford stopped at the door. Zitella was not aware of the lapse of an hour since the departure of the Nugents, and hastily descended to the room, but did not reach it before the servant had again closed the door. Upon entering, the back of the visitor was towards her; and so deeply was she lost in the examination of a full-length picture which hung over a sofa, an admirable likeness of Nugent, from the hand of Lawrence, that the light step

step of Zitella was unheard, until she was at her side, when, turning abruptly, she extended her hand, and greeted with much courtesy, the arrival of her young relative in the metropolis.

The general person of the Countess was one to which no chance of taste, nor aid of dress, could possibly have prefixed the epithet of "handsome;" yet although a quizzing female fashionist might have classed her amid the "*frights*" of their ready ridicule, and a modern Lothario might never have condescended to raise his eyes towards her a second time, nay, lamented the disappointment they had sustained in the trouble of a first view, yet there was quite enough of mind, blended with ordinary features, to have satisfied a rational observer, since disgust the person of Lady Darnford could never create; neatness and propriety presided at her toilette, and in her thirtieth year, the Countess had never been seen to sport the frock, so much in request among declining

 belles,

belles, who think, by juvenile attire, to gain a passport to renovated youth. The manner of Lady Darnford was, however, far too imperious to please; there was an air of authority in the delivery of opinion, and an apparent exultation in evincing her disdain for human kind in general; a misanthropic sarcasm was strongly infused into her most common conversation; she professed to hold female beauty in sovereign contempt, and man in still greater; for, bowing at its shrine, she had an excuse ever prompt to aid the cause of the erring ugly, and a ready satire to decry the apparent virtues of the lovely; she derived a secret pleasure in annoying every thing that was beautiful, for, notwithstanding everybody allowed the ill nature and ill humour which too often impregnated the observations of the Countess, yet she had a talent for the ridiculous, so naturally powerful, and so well aided by *manners*, that although her Ladyship's sketches were always the caricatures of life, yet so much of

of genuine feature gave point to the painting of her highly-coloured portraits, that each was struck with the ability of the drawer, and, lost in admiration of her talents, felt not a proper detestation for their perversion.

She never made professions of regard, and she therefore never deceived; she even avowed to feel no affection for a single individual in creation. The hospitality of her mansion arose from a wish to gratify self, deriving amusement from a constant succession of visitors, who contributed to entertain the heavy hours of life; she required nothing farther of them; she gave *fetes*, to secure gay and fashionable society; and the bidden guests gave that society, to kill time, and to be seen at the sumptuous board of the Countess of Darnford.

The first customary salutations having passed, the noble visitor continued—" I have very recently parted from a family to whom your Ladyship is, I find, well known, and one of its members, in parti-

cular, has spoken of you in terms of warm encomium."

"May I enquire then, my dear Madam, to what kind friend I am indebted for this partial approbation?"

"I spoke of him neither as a *friend* nor a foe, I think," replied Lady Darnford, "nor yet as a lover, although, had he not been long a fond devoted Benedict, I should have conceived the latter appellation correct, from his very enthusiastic panegyric—I allude to the Dean of L——"

"Then it is a mutual partiality," rejoined Zitella, smiling, "and as he is an acknowledged old-fashioned husband, I may venture to avow it with impunity; but as your Ladyship has doubtless seen his daughter, will you permit me to enquire your opinion of her, as I acknowledge myself a little curious?"

"I never looked at her," replied the former, carelessly; "such chits never engage my attention for a moment. Long girls

girls in frocks are my aversion; they never have a single idea of their own, but are mere echoes of mammas, or gouvernantés. I hate copies of every kind; give me an original; be it good, bad, or indifferent, so it be but an original, I will support it; but a servile imitator is my detestation. Now, Lady Zitella, you were the only child I ever knew in my life, who dared to form an opinion of your own, and imbibe uninfluenced impressions from surrounding objects, and I absolutely, in one conversation, gained from you three perfectly *new* ideas."

"I do indeed fear your Ladyship has given me *ideal* perfection," replied our heroine, smiling.

"You do not think what you say," was the blunt retort, "and I detest the disclaiming encomium by pretended disbelief, it is so truly Ancaster—for Heaven's sake, do not condescend to copy *there*. I never take the trouble to compliment any one, therefore do not fear my paying this

this incense to yourself; I never seek to please, and for this plain convincing reason, I never have yet seen a human being who would be pleased, according to my definition, rationally; deceit must be used, before success can be attained, and I abhor its very shadow. But *apropos*, I ought to have tendered my congratulations to your Ladyship, on the arrival of Mr. Nugent and his fair bride; she is very, *very* beautiful, I understand," she subjoined, fixing her prominent meaning orbs full in the countenance of her companion, with a provoking expression, to which nothing could be decisively attached, although there was still enough to annoy.

"Lovely in the extreme," was the reply of Zitella, who felt angered at her own confusion in speaking of Mrs. Nugent.

"What a happy man he must be!" said the Countess, distinctly pronouncing each word.

"Happy!" involuntarily re-echoed our heroine, who had so recently experienced

proof,

proof, that beauty alone in a wife could not produce even tranquillity.

The Countess surveyed her with sarcastic archness, almost laughed, but said nothing in reply; while our orphan then first recalled the necessity of tendering the united compliments of the married pair, and apologies for unavoidable absence.

"An indispensable engagement, no doubt," rejoined the Countess, ironically; "but *n'importe*, pray present my compliments to Mr. Nugent, and tell him I shall take an early opportunity of being presented to his lady, whose far-famed beauty has already spread so widely, as to render me anxious to behold his celebrated Venus."

There was a dry sarcastic emphasis in this speech, which could not be overlooked by Zitella; her colour heightened, she was displeased and offended; but the Countess never regarded the feelings of others; she was often even affectedly blunt; she never sought to time her satire;

it was always on the alert to attack, and the whole pleasure of her life seemed to exist in its indulgence.

Placed in a situation the most delicate, Zitella struggled with her own resentment, at the manner of Lady Darnford, and simply bowing, deemed it best to appear to take literally what she had said, and made her acknowledgments accordingly.

"And now having mutually made speeches on the occasion," resumed the Countess, "I must not forget the more immediate object of my visit. I do not tender you my friendship, Lady Zitella, for I cannot dispense what I do not believe exists in the universe; but if I can be of the slightest use and assistance, in the light of a senior relative and *chaperone*, in any instance, pray command my services; for example, your presentation is indispensably necessary, and it may be very possible the lady of Mr. Nugent may not have passed through that eventful ceremony; I think it may be advisable, therefore, that I should

present

present you to her Majesty, since family connexion renders me an eligible personage to perform that necessary and usual deed of etiquette."

"I thank your Ladyship sincerely, and shall esteem myself honoured by appearing under your auspices in the St. James's circle; indeed, I gratefully feel this attention, I would say *friendly* wish to benefit me, but you have rigorously interdicted that term."

"As a term, it answers as well as any other civil word," replied the Countess, "since we never seek truisms in mere common-place expressions of courtesy."

"And yet I should hope if we did, friendship might rank as one of those rare truisms; I have experienced it so largely, even in my short span of life, that I bow to the established conviction of its existence."

"I never knew an *heiress* that did not," rejoined Lady Darnford, dryly.

Our heroine sighed heavily.

"You

"You are not romantic, I hope," abruptly resumed the former, "for I detest any thing whining."

"And I smile at it," replied Zitella, "and therefore not wishing to become an object of derision to myself, I have forsworn romance for life; indeed, I am so determined to swerve from its rules, that I have at times even doubted the existence of love."

"There you err; without gaining one friend, you may encounter twenty lovers; there is a superabundance of love let loose about the world, that is to say, personal partiality, alias *sensuality*; you will have quite sufficient of these personal admirers, for you have beauty—yes, you certainly are very beautiful," she added, surveying her countenance with unhesitating scrutiny; "and you are the only really lovely female for whom I have for ages felt interested; and I do not doubt, when you have been besieged by admiration through one winter, that at its close I shall despise

despise you as much as I now feel inclined to estimate you. I am not mad," she added, "I am not indeed, although astonishment dwells on your features, and implies a doubt of my sanity; but I have a gratification in indulging a kind of speaking thought; to deliver my sentiments without reserve, pleases myself, and I have already informed you, that I care not to please any one else; I delight to be strange, and if others choose to stare at my wayward bluntness, why then I choose to be amused a the expence of their surprise.—But to again return to more solid matter—I would advise your Ladyship not to appear in public, until you emerge with due *eclat* into the royal presence: have a convenient cold till then, and there will be a proper levee three days hence; your court paraphernalia, upon such an occasion, may be arranged in that time, and I will send my carriage for you at an appointed hour, for I presume you have not yet had time to establish your own equipage,

page, spend the day with me, and a seat shall be reserved for you in my box at the opera for the same evening, which will establish your *début* as complete."

"I willingly acquiesce, my dear Madam, in your recommendation and arrangements, and will, with much pleasure, attend your Ladyship upon both occasions, provided my uncle approves it, and I am certain he cannot do otherwise."

"Be cautioned," said Lady Darnford, "and be certain of nothing, or you will be infallibly disappointed in most things; your uncle likes to do every thing common, in an *un*common way; he likes to be talked of, and he succeeds most admirably at the present moment: however, I do not imagine he will carry whim so far, as to positively object to the road I have marked out for you, nor sacrifice your essential advantage to his own caprice."

"As my nearest relation, as well as nominated guardian," returned Zitella, much hurt at the manner of the Countess,

when

when speaking of her uncle, "I shall certainly feel myself anxious to be guided by his advice, without the necessity of his according positive interdiction."

"A very dutiful prettily delivered speech, if purposed in reality, and I trust the *sage* monitor will estimate it properly, although having a great and irrepressible aversion to every thing *reasonable,* I fear it will not have all the weight I could wish for your sake. Mr. Nugent, my dear, is a very good man, but he must reap a second crop of wild oats before he becomes a rational one; it is an astonishing prolific grain, and has flourished to perfection, no doubt, under the influence of a warm aspect; do not be too implicitly guided by his counsel, or you will infallibly err, for, if I am not strangely mistaken in the right reading of your character, you possess more discretion at eighteen than he will exhibit at forty; he is a nabob, Lady Zitella, and that situation will not teach him

worldly

worldly wisdom, however it may unlock the gates of worldly pleasure. Surrounded by parasites and sycophants, the truth can never reach him, or if it could, would not meet a very warm reception. For myself, I have now a cold, a frigid heart; this avowal will prove no recommendation to you, but a cool head may be a greater one. I will, if it so please you, be your magic lanthorn, to display the heterogeneous figures who dance on the curtain of folly. I knew your mother well in early life, before either of us had a right to the title of Darnford; and believe me, when I affirm, that had the late Countess imagined it possible I would have sought her daughter, she would never have advised that daughter to shun me. My rank and wealthy jointure render me an object of consideration and respect to the worldly crowd; my acquaintance is even solicited, courted, cultivated by the gay and great, and yet I am universally hated."

"Hated!"

"Hated!" reiterated Zitella, with involuntary astonishment, "and yet the friend of my mother!"

"I never said I was *her friend*," rejoined the Countess bluntly; "I profess friendship for no individual in creation, and never expect it myself. We once were intimate; and I again repeat, she would feel gratified, could she behold me the *chaperone*, the adviser of her daughter. Nugent was her only brother, she viewed him with partiality, she never analyzed his character as rigidly as I have done, else he had never been your principal guardian, your principal protector; he is deficient in stability, in prudence, in rationality, three essentials in the guardian of an heiress; he has many amiable, but not a single useful quality—but I have infected you with gravity," she added, observing the more than serious countenance of Zitella; "yet I do not regret it; you are placed in a situation that requires reflection."

"I am

"I am but too fully sensible of that painful truism," replied the pensive orphan. "Believe me," she resumed with a forced smile, "I am quite aware of all the dangers that surround the *heiress!*"

"So much the better," returned the former drily; "your mother knew how to represent them, from individual bitter knowledge; and it is preferable for you to gain from her experience than your own, for her's was a painful lesson."

"Indeed," rejoined Zitella, "I could never feel gratified by that recollection, since it was too surely obtained at the expence of the happiness of a fond and affectionate parent."

"That sounds very engaging," said the Countess, "no doubt; but as Lady Darnford is dead, and in all Christian charity we hope her sufferings are at an end, and yours only about to commence, why, weighing all considerations in the scales of common sense, I think it is quite as well you should have been taught by proxy.

proxy. Your mother is, we trust, in a good country, and you are in a very bad one, and this makes some little difference, sufficient at least to balance all regret for past evil, and to reconcile you to the present advantage. But to discuss good and evil, is not my present purpose; other matters call me hence, and having executed my more immediate intention in the present visit, arrests my further wishes. Acquaint me of your determination in regard to the royal levee, when you have discussed the subject with your *sage* guardian—and now, for the present, adieu." She threw a card upon the table before them, and with marked emphasis repeated—" That for the *beautiful* Mrs. Nugent, according to all due formula ;" then slightly touching the hand of our heroine, she retreated from the room.

CHAP. II.

Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?

SHAKESPEARE.

The Darnford Narrative.

ZITELLA passed her hours, until the return of the Nugents, in reflecting on this eccentric paternal connexion; and we must confess, however deficient in the feelings of affection, and however extraordinary her deportment appeared, yet she would infinitely have preferred this singular, and even sometimes rude, female for the wife of her uncle, rather than the good-natured, warm-hearted, and beautiful Fanny. This, we

we must admit, is not very heroine-like; but our heiress was compounded of mere natural materials, at least we think so; she had an insuperable aversion to that coarse vulgarity which generally appertains to those individuals suddenly transplanted from a lowly soil to an elevated height; she had no narrow prejudice attached to mere natal distinction; but an enlightened cultivated mind and polished manners, possessed for her powerful attractions; and although we cannot maintain that Lady Darnford was in the habit of displaying a refined elegance of address, yet her Ladyship, in every varied expression and action, contrived to evince that it was caprice, and not ignorance, which rendered her blunt and uncourteous; it was the insolence of self-consequence, and not a deficiency in knowledge of the world, or in good breeding, that made her violate its precepts. Nothing was so gratifying to this singular woman, as to express contempt or disdain; and the same pains which any other would

have taken to please, Lady Darnford exerted to displease; while she was ever anxious to exhibit to those around, that the effort was as amusing as its success was gratifying. Her character was, however, attached to her rank, and worldly consideration; had no coronet graced her brow, she would have had too much common sense to have attempted a mode of procedure which would, without this support, not have been tolerated; but convinced the fashionable herd would never shun the wealthy Countess, whose mansion was a constant scene of festivity and splendour, she hesitated not to range in the wide field of eccentric extravagance, and even misanthropy.

Mr. Nugent did not object to the arrangement for the presentation of his niece; but with a bitter smile, requested her not to torment him by speaking of an object to which he bore insufferable aversion, the sound of whose very name was an annoyance to his ear. He however informed Mrs. Nugent, there was a necessity she should

should leave her card at the door of the Countess, although none to enquire if her Ladyship were within.

Lady Zitella Herbert, in compliance with the advice of Lady Darnford, remained a voluntary prisoner in the house of her guardian, until the important day of the Queen's drawing-room arrived; she embraced those hours of leisure this seclusion afforded, to write to her valued friend Mrs. Mulgrave; nor did she attempt disguising from this aged monitor, the unpleasant situation in which the ill-judged connexion of Mr. Nugent had placed her; she essayed not to soften the portrait of the beautiful Fanny, being aware that public report would be swift in proclaiming it, and baffle every endeavour to palliate the infatuated folly of the victim of personal attachment; kind and affectionate were her remembrances to the worthy Doctor and Mrs. Moreland, while most sincere were her expressions of re-

gret that she was not still beneath the protecting roof of Sudley Hall, rather than the guest of the coarse, ignorant, and weak Mrs. Nugent!

Arrayed in all the state of courtly paraphernalia, and brilliant in natural beauty, our heroine made her public *début* on the stage of elevated life; her person was of that cast, which assimilated with the splendour of magnificent attire; her style of face and figure would have appeared metamorphosed, in the straw gipsey hat, or red cloak of our fashionable *simpliciads*; this rustic rage was ill-suited for a Zitella, such as her we now delineate; indeed, we think the cottage mob-cap, and the habiliments of the *Paysanne* jacket, would have absolutely been a complete disguise. Nature seemed to have formed her not only to be estimable, but conspicuously great; a confined sphere was ill calculated for the display of the nervous strength of her comprehensive mind; the gem of a soul great as hers shone through

through the casket in which it was temporarily enclosed, and diffused a brilliant lustre over the polished shell; but alas! the head and the heart were not operated upon by the same influence; the bosom of Zitella was alive to the most sensible feelings, feelings that her better judgment often proclaimed weak and erring, and reason was often compelled to exert a forcible check, to restrain the too impetuous emotions of her breast.

The presentation of an heiress of rank, even those who form the *haut-ton*, estimate as one of the lesser *events* of life; the rights of primogenitureship, in the male line, so exclusively monopolize the wealth of the nobles of our land, that a young woman, possessed both of rank and extensive fortune, is not a very common individual; and when to these the union of beauty consummates a triumvir of attraction, exalted is the pinnacle on which she is placed by worldly estimation! Lady Zitella Herbert was consequently decreed

to become the very idol of celebrity in the school of fashion; and that genuine suffusion of nature, the tender blush which naturally arises from the heart to the cheek of the truly modest female, in a situation exposed to public scrutiny as the present, gave her, in the eyes of the men, an additional attraction, which, in spite of the endeavour of dashing fashionables to introduce, in contradistinction, the superior powers of self-possession and intrepidity, will, even in the present age of depravity, maintain its happy influence.

Women alone ridicule the gothic blush; the most vitiated of the opposite sex pay to it still the tribute of admiration and respect; nor in the *lawful* mistress of his affections, would any man wish to behold it extirpated: it is the only personal auxiliary of beauty that cannot be supplied by art; it is the gift of the heart, who jealously maintains Nature's patent.

Zitella felt relieved when the dull ceremonious court-circle was dismissed, and she

she found herself once more *tête-à-tête* with Lady Darnford, whose carriage was ordered to stop at the house of the nabob, for our heroine to be relieved of her hoop. Mrs. Nugent was out, and Lady Zitella could not but perceive that her uncle had purposely contrived she should be so, having himself made an engagement for her to accompany a party to the Linwood exhibition; consequently finding neither at home, nor likely to return until late, Zitella hesitated not to comply with the request of Lady Darnford, to proceed with her at once to Grosvenor-square, and that she would herself set her down in safety at home, after the opera; for Zitella was obliged to acknowledge, that she had forgotten so much the latter engagements of the day.

"I do not purpose to see company this morning," said her Ladyship, as her young guest ascended the stairs of Darnford House, "therefore I shall have at least two

 hours

hours *tête-à-tête* before the dinner visitants will arrive, and that time I intend dedicating to your investigation."

"Do not terrify me, my dear Madam, by such a determined declaration, for I fear, like most drugs, I shall, on analyzation, be found composed more of the bitter than the sweet."

"You expect a compliment now," replied the Countess, "but I never gratify vanity; and in fact, I really do not yet know what I wish to find you; if as perfect as mortal can be, I should hate you, because I should not like to feel there was an individual in the universe, whom in justice I ought to regard, it would so entirely discompose my general train of thinking; and if you were to prove *very* imperfect, why then I should despise you, for forming another common-place character, and repent time thrown away upon an unworthy study."

"I would rather be the object of your

Ladyship's

Ladyship's hatred than contempt, I confess," returned Zitella, half smiling at the oddity of the foregoing declaration.

"You are right; that asseveration evinces some spirit. I abhor a love-sick girl, sighing and wailing, trembling and stammering; I like a prompt answer to an impertinent speech; I detest silent terror, since it affords me no opportunity for a retort: but," she added, turning to a portable library, "here is a little repository of books, which will supply the failure of conversation for the present, as I must retire to make some alteration in my dress, and disrobe myself, for comfort, from these cumbrous ornaments, which, with all due regard to the folly of others, I have worn to-day, to my own personal inconvenience."

The Countess disappeared, and Zitella drew from the library shelves, Miss Owenson's Lay of an Irish Harp. She was engaged in its perusal, and did not raise her eyes from the volume, until they were suddenly and forcibly arrested by that

attraction which is said to exist between the orbs of sight, when steadily rivetted on the human countenance.

Her surprise was momentary, on beholding the Countess seated opposite, surveying her with deep and grave, if not melancholy rumination; she seemed unprepared for the sudden discovery of our heroine, and her manner was not as happy as usual in displaying accustomed indifference, nor the effect produced equal to the attempt to effect it, as she exclaimed—"I have been seeking a resemblance, and not without success; it is a likeness to your relative the nabob. Your features are his, though certainly both softened and improved; the lineaments of your character appear to correspond, in this respect, with your countenance; but never was there a greater field for improvement than on your good uncle. Pray, my dear," she added, most intently bending over, and appearing to read some cards that were spread on a table before her, "pray, did you ever

hear

hear this said gentleman mention a frightful, hideous Sophia Howard?"

"No, indeed, never," replied Zitella.

"Well then, I suppose the ugly subject was *too* horrible to be talked of; but you know I differ from every one else, and therefore I like to talk of this terrible object, and you shall hear some account of her, and what the monster actually effected, nothing less than sending Robert Nugent to seek his fortune on the burning coast of a very different part of the globe.—Once upon a time, before a *Catalani* warbled on our land, a *Betty* played the mighty hero of a Denmark tale, or a female *Clarke* was admitted in a royal office, lived a fair daughter of earth—no, not fair either, for she was of dark, homely grain—however, this ill-starred heroine of my tale was persuaded by her well-meaning parents, that it was a right proper thing to fall in love with her playfellow, Robert Nugent; and what with one grandam and another grandam, one aunt, and another cousin, she absolutely

was

was talked into approving this wayward boy, aye, and even sent her heart to pay him a volunteer visit: it happened in the chapter of circumstance, that the visit was never returned, which was certainly a very uncivil, ungallant act. Now the young gentleman's father was unfortunately of the old school, and he made no allowance for the whims, the inclinations, and the caprices of the new; Discord ruled the hour, she seized the war-denouncing trumpet, and a coarse loud air issued from it with great execution, while, with impetuous step, the self-willed Robert rushed off the English stage, vowing hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, against the little elf that had been the origin of the whole commotion, and slipped dexterously from the chain that was to have linked them in lasting bonds; for the soaring youth was not inclined to yield to any fetter that was not decorated by the flowrets of beauty; the harsh iron features of that extended for his acceptance, were quite insupportable to the refinement of

his

his heart; and Robert therefore fled to a burning zone, which assimilated most happily with his warm temperament; for the dark gentleman of the sulphureous region having done all the mischief that was then allowed him, by inciting filial disobedience, resigned his victim to the care of Neptune; and on the tempestuous billows of the sea, was Robert borne a voluntary alien from his country and connexions, roused by the intrepid spirit of independence, which disdained to conciliate the forgiveness of a parent, who had been till then the most indulgent and affectionate of fathers.

"At this epoch, Sophia thought it very becoming to add a moaning ditty to the agreeable concert of the two families mutually disappointed in the epithalamium, for which she substituted the maid forlorn, really conceiving the execution of a lament a duty 'due to the shade of buried love;' and shed many a copious shower of tears, to complete the pathetic effect of her pensive lay! now your mother chose to be

very *enragé* with her upon this occasion, because she imagined the lamentation and the accompanying dew-drops of sensibility had heightened the resentment of Mr. Nugent to six times the violence it would otherwise have assumed; Sophia was indignant, merely to exhibit her noble spirit, which refused obedience to circumstance; and I believe each said more than either speaker ever liked to reflect upon; yet neither had the generosity to retract, from an apprehension of appearing deficient in proper pride, alias stubborn adhesion to known error. The families of Nugent and Howard separated, to meet no more in amity. The deserted fair was removed from sylvan heights to London town, and stared, as expected, at all the new sights; but no one stared at her, which was a great misfortune, I assure you, at least she thought so then, since it plainly informed her she was not worth even that slight proof of approbation: however, high connexions, and great military interest, centered

centered in the head of her family, which a young lieutenant had the wondrous wisdom to discover, and to become himself commanding officer, he would really have condescended to accept her for the future general's wife; he was very handsome, very gallant, and very energetic; she had a great inclination to exhibit a dashing rival to Nugent, and an elegant, spirited son of Mars was very admirably adapted for the purpose: but at this moment appeared on the *tapis*, an antique venerable 'GOLD STICK IN WAITING,' who thought her a rational sort of woman for an old man; and so, my dear, the dotard being nearly arrived at second childhood, had, I suppose, but second sight, which they say is always imperfect, did not discover, fortunately for Sophia, all the frightful museum of feature her face contained; and, to the inexpressible delight of her father, this rich superannuated peer played the blind lover: but the lady hesitated between becoming the young man's convenience, or the old man's nurse.

I must

I must confess, however, ambition prevailed, and Sophia accepted the gilded staff to ascend the lofty ladder; and a very politic election it proved, calculating all things by the common rule of accounts; for after five years attendance on the gouty chair of Lord Darnford, she received an annuity of ten thousand per annum, and started an *achievement* at twenty-six!"

Notwithstanding the ridiculous attached to the recital of this tale, the attentive Zitella traced, in the hurried fold and refold of a little twisted billet she had raised from the table, a degree of agitation her Ladyship had no wish to render apparent; for pride stimulated the effort to make Robert Nugent, and even his niece, believe the unqualified rejection had not assailed her peace: so powerfully had this *trait* of her mind operated, that for the last few years, she had persuaded herself she was in reality indifferent to the object of her early love, and that her breast was incapable of feeling aught but contempt for the

the man who had cruelly sacrificed the happiness of the affectionate companion of his childhood, and violated filial duty at the shrine of mere personal prejudice; but the return of this very Nugent, the sight of his portrait, the family resemblance that lived in Zitella, reillumined the stifled embers, and, insensibly to herself, that likeness gave interest to the society of our heroine.

Her misanthropy had arisen from a disappointment of the heart, and the certainly unjust resentment of her early friend, the late Lady Darnford; she believed herself deceived both in love and friendship; she had forsworn those sentiments in consequence, and affected a coldness of constitution, which, from the habit of assuming, in process of time, verged on full reality. Certain it was, Sophia Howard had possessed, in early youth, many amiable and estimable qualities; as the wife of Robert Nugent, she would have been at once a respectable, intelligent companion, a fond

devoted

devoted partner; but her affections blighted, her happiness destroyed, and her pride assailed, in the most torturing, because the most tender point, from the undisguised contempt and successive aversion of the man she truly loved, Sophia Howard had become also the Lády Darnford we have presented to our readers.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

"Keep nature's great original in view,
And thence the living images pursue."

"Make not to dang'rous wit a vain pretence,
But wisely rest content with modest sense;
Of those who claim it, more than half have none,
And half of those who have it, are undone."

The Asiatic.

Having closed our last chapter with speaking of the Countess of Darnford, it now behoves us to introduce the separate guests who appear at her ever-sumptuous board, and to compare the contents of her Ladyship's box at the opera in the evening; but as

as the female world are in general more anxious to hear of the attractions of the male creation, than the beauties of their own, I will, in compliance with the general wish, (for I dare not hope for many readers of my own sex) present first the beaux of the party. Foremost of the group, in hereditary rank, stood Lord Cuthbert, the senior son of a noble Marquis, and fully requiring rank to distinguish him, since other individual claims to notice he had none; his stature was ridiculously low; but his head seemed determined to compensate for deficiency in height, as far as possible, by its own dimensions; his face we can only liken to a lumber-room, where features seemed jumbled together by nature, without the slightest attention to ornament, harmony, regularity, or meaning; it was a mass of confusion, composed of contrarieties, and looking perfectly unconscious of its own absurdity. He was a passive machine, that his companions might move into any direction frolic fancy pleased:

pleased: ridicule never offended him, for he had not understanding to discern it; rebuke never affected him, for he had not sense to feel it; he intrigued without passion, he gamed without inclination, and he drank without deriving gratification from the Bacchanalian fount.

Next behold Sir Horace Lister, a romantic fashionist. Ye country belles, disdain not this strange connexion of opposite terms, for contrariety is the whim of the moment; admit then the romance of a Bond-street lounger; true, it differs from that of a former Corydon, or a Chevalier Quixote, for it simply consisted in a pedestrian tour over England and Wales, accoutred in a green jacket, a wallet attached to the shoulder by a leathern belt, and a huge oaken staff, which gave a picturesque finish to the portrait of the *Rambler*, who conceived himself immortalized in that character, by the execution of a capital likeness by Shelley, which had appeared in the Somerset exhibition. It is however but

but justice to Sir Horace to confess, that he actually maintained the spirit of romance in his language, for to woman, lovely woman, he never spoke, but to breathe of love, to profess his aversion to the insipid dissipation of a town life, and his adoration of the sylvan deities; conceiving himself in practice to have paid them a sufficient sacrifice, in the oblation of three months spent in fording sylvan streams, wading through bogs and mires, fighting brambles and nettles! the remainder of his homage he wisely effected in theory alone, and with all imaginable effect, on those belles by whom he was surrounded, since to these town-bred heroines there was a charm of novelty in the soft strains of a rural enthusiast, in the rhapsodical effusions of Arcadian sentiment!

Last of the male votaries of "single blessedness," came Colonel Bertie, of the Lifeguards, the very Narcissus of fashion, whose fair pinky skin, and languishing eyes, of a blue truly celestial, gave an effe-

minate

minate beauty to his countenance, that was in perfect correspondence with the fragile slender limbs which composed his figure, and the equally delicate clothing that enwrapped them. A coat of the lightest drab was buttoned nearly to the knee, with a tightness that marked the small circular dimensions of his waist, and left open in the bosom to display the lace frontlet of his shirt, a cravat of gossamer muslin, and a pink silk handkerchief just confined within the waistcoat by a careless half knot, a brilliant heart broach, and a dia mond eye-glass, too small for real utility, suspended by a plait of female hair, we presume, being fine as the spider's thread, completed the attire of this *interesting guardsman*, for such was the appellation by which Colonel Bertie was dignified by his fair friends! his manner was in unison with his general appearance, soft without tenderness, rather whining than winning; he was the temporary lover of every passing beauty, without having yet conde-

 scended

scended to offer his pretty self for matrimonial trammels.

The Miss Harleys have already been presented to the reader; their parents were more renowned for wealth than any trait of peculiar character. Mr. Harley was a banker of considerable eminence, and his daughters were each professedly to possess twenty thousand pounds for a marriage portion, when they entered that sober state with his full approbation; but if not, their brother would then benefit by their folly.

One more female was of the party, a daughter of Admiral Clairmond, who, in compliance with the ostensible taste of Sir Horace Lister, had commenced to play the enthusiast, and sported every extravagance of Persian imitation; but the ridiculous bombast of her diction may declare itself, without further animadversion. Her face and figure nature had intended to be handsome; but the former was absolutely distorted by the attempt to infuse a vivid expression into features nature intended

for

for mere commonalty; and the latter was twisted into curves and semi-curves, by the pageantry of its soul-moving action; while her dress was a strange medley of the costly and the simple, fantastically absurd as her manner: but those who bow in humble deference to the power of all-mighty Cupid, will grant a ready palliation of the fair Euphemia's folly, by the stimulant of love, at least, Miss Clairmond hesitated not universally to declare she writhed under the influence of this torturing passion; and if her lips had not moved to pronounce the name of the hero, her eyes had supplied their deficiency, and the engines of kindred sentiment were ever on the alert to attract the young Baronet: but, unfortunately, romance had only been assumed by the latter, to mark him from the common herd, since the affected sylvan had possessed sufficient knowledge to be aware he had not talents to immortalize himself in the higher path of rationality, nor incli-

nations sufficiently depraved, to reach the goal of the lower road of celebrity, in the school of finished profligacy. An extreme elegance of person, great interest of feature, and a pleasing voice, were his sole individual recommendations. Thus, in compliance with his assumed character, Sir Horace might at times whisper the soft incense of praise to the Persian tendency of the warm effusion of language from the coral lips of Euphemia Clairmond; yet he viewed her but as the heroine of a theatric representation, to whom he played the *kindred soul!* he was well pleased to be the fancied lover of an evening, but he had no wish to sink into, *propria persona,* the husband of a female absurdly singular, for he had sufficient wit to discover that the tender Euphemia was better qualified to prove a mistress in celebrity, than a wife in rationality.

These were the individuals who constituted that party to which our heroine was presented by Lady Darnford; and freed from

from the mortification attendant upon the presence of Mrs. Nugent, the natural spirits of youth rebounded with elasticity, as if suddenly released from an oppressive weight; an almost unusual lightness of heart shed its benignant influence over her countenance, which teemed with that vivacious animation so peculiarly attractive to men in general; a soft flush of pleasure glowed on her cheeks, and her eyes received that radiant reflection which arose from an emotion natural and commendable, the satisfaction of beholding herself again appear under the auspices of propriety and respectability; yet she could not be insensible to the difference of manner that now mingled in the conversation of those around, so often exclusively directed to herself, with the most marked attention; and she turned with unusual haughtiness from the altered address of the Miss Harleys, who were most anxious to efface the remembrance of their former error, in regret for treating her with the cold

distance they conceived justly due to a mere dependent relative of the nabob's vulgar wife. The senior laughed with less assurance, and the junior, throwing off her insolent mantle of reserve, really condescended to seek the means of rendering herself agreeable.

A cloud, notwithstanding every endeavour to disperse it, overhung the conversation of Lady Darnford; every sentence she uttered was still blunt, but without point; every word was an effort, every smile a pain, even the pleasure of sarcasm seemed temporarily cooled; she was rather severe, from an unconquerable habit of being so, than from a spontaneous emotion of momentary gratification.

Colonel Bertie was the last of the bidden guests who arrived, and after the first ceremonial bows, and accompanying sentences, he continued—"How did your Ladyship like Bath? Or are we already answered, by the short stay you made on a first visit to that gay city?"

"I never

"I never reply by movements," replied the Countess, "since Heaven has given me the power of articulation; in reality, I commemorate the time I spent there, chiefly upon one account, as it enabled me to become known to a being who did honour to the hand of nature, and appeared worthy the name of *man!*"

"Your Ladyship, surely, might have gained the sight of what, to me, appears no phenomenon, without travelling so far in its search," said the effeminate youth, surveying himself, as he paraded before her.

"Where?" cried the Countess, affectedly glancing round the room; "not surely in the atmosphere I now breathe."

"Ah, dear Lady Darnford!" exclaimed Miss Clairmond, "direct my aching vision to this constellation of your horizon; with such a creature, I could repel the storms of the northern blast, buffet the waves of adversity with which I may be assailed, and having successfully stemmed the

the torrent of that ocean, whose tempestuous billows, roaring from afar, at length overtake the almost despairing mariner; but, buoyed above the fear of death, by the heroic partner of my toilsome pilgrimage, I would leap the hazardous precipice, and find security under his wing!"

"And traverse the tremendous wilds of imagination, with the same effect as the monkey who went to roam the world! Pardon me, young lady, if I am rudely severe; but when you know more of me, you will learn to tolerate bluntness, as a matter of course; for, like the Mercury of Jove, I forge and scatter thunderbolts at random: to apologize is not common with me, but I hate to break a spider on the wheel."

"And yet you suffer the offender to remain on the rack," replied Euphemia, "without relieving the heart when it pants for the anxiously-expected intelligence, and almost bursts asunder to receive within its folds the enchanting unknown."

"True,"

"True," returned her Ladyship, and, turning to the fair enquirer, added—"You will discover him under the appellation of Clarence Molesworth; but the rich mine of ore lies far beyond the surface; it will not be kenned by the mere superficial observer, for being somewhat varnished by the tinselled glitter of fashion, obtrudes not upon the casual passenger its concealed wealth."

"It is not every ground in which a mine can be sprung," replied Sir Horace; "but when once effected, the owner of the estate seldom seeks to conceal the prolific advantage resulting from the possession of such a treasure."

"True, my good Sir; but the generality, to whom it is indifferent, will be content to take it upon common report; the road to examination is too laborious for the exertion of a tender fashionist, since unfortunately the diamonds of this treasure are only adapted for interior ornaments, and

consequently would suit the taste of but few females."

"Those your Ladyship possess cut deep," rejoined Zitella.

"Upon brittle materials only; but, at present, the clippings may scatter sparks to attract, although they make no indelible impression."

"Your Ladyship would have more justly assimilated it to the brilliant, since it is at least conspicuously pointed; and from that peculiarity lapidaries acknowledge its superiority," said Sir Horace.

"But the setting," interrupted Euphemia, "was it worthy of the gem?"

"The inscription on it was legible in good and great characters," replied the Countess, "and that satisfied me; but I believe there was quite enough of extraneous ornament to indulge the baby fancy."

"It has been set to the purpose, certainly," said Miss Harley, "if we may

judge from report; for I yesterday received a letter from a friend at Bath, who soars absolutely into extacies on the subject of the all-commanding elegant Clarence, the interesting invalid, who figures in the Bath pump-room the *nonpareil* of the season!"

"And sips health, no doubt," rejoined Miss Clairmond, "from the Bladud stream, like the pensive willow that bends to salute the refreshing wave. Say, dear Lady Darnford, is not this the renowned Indian flower recently transplanted into the clime of England, glowing in the warmth of its fervid soil, and shining in sunny splendour with all its budding beauties? Oh that I could but once behold this enchanting divinity, rising, like Andes, the light of worlds!"

"Your *giant* imagination, Miss Clairmond, is most unfortunate in its present enlargement. My hero partakes of a less stupendous form than the huge personification of the star of the *Western* Ocean."

"I never descend to the literal," said

Euphemia, theatrically, "it is so *canaille*: speech, with me, ever soars on the widely-extended wings of fancy."

"Then I most sincerely wish this tenant of air would, by flapping its wings, always afford me a warning, in time to avoid its devastating overwhelming cataract; but we were speaking of substance, not imagination, which I confess suits my common-place understanding much better. Pray, Lady Zitella, have you never heard your newly-arrived voyagers speak of Clarence Molesworth?"

The reply was in the negative.

"You astonish me; both Mr. and Mrs. Nugent are perfectly well known to him, having been a passenger in the same ship which conveyed them from India; I assure you he not only entertained me by a rational, but a very animated description of *the lady* in particular."

Our heroine coloured, she could not mistake the provoking archness of manner of Lady Darnford; and she was now at once convinced

convinced that her Ladyship was fully acquainted with the extent of her uncle's folly.

"It was a marvellously pleasant narrative with which he obliged me," resumed the speaker, "with beauty for its heroine, *a l'ordinaire*; but he moralized so dismally on the subject, that he really turned an admirable comic sketch into a tragic truth."

The eyes of Zitella were bent on the carpet, her lips half moved to reply, but she seemed irresolute in what manner it were best to receive the indirect satire. Miss Harley laughed, ostensibly at a fan with fanciful figures curiously emblematical on its mount, which had just been handed to her by Euphemia, and her sister affected a sudden forced gravity; but the majority of the party appeared actually ignorant of the painful allusion the speech of Lady Darnford had conveyed to the bosom of the sensitive orphan; and the summons to the dining-room fortunately relieved

relieved her from a continuance of oblique sarcasm, by diverting the thoughts of Lady Darnford from the tormenting theme to matter of present necessity.

The Harleys quitted the circle after the guests had arisen from table, to adjourn to another party; while the rest of the group, at the usual hour, adjourned to the King's Theatre, as previously arranged.

Upon ascending the first flight of stairs, a very elegant-looking young man passed them, he was in full mourning, and fixing his eyes on Zitella for a moment, approached, and slightly bowing, addressed her, with the fear that a pearl crescent in the front of her turban was unfastened; she thanked the stranger, but on applying her hand to the ornament, found it a mistake. At the moment, Sir Horace Lister, on whose arm she leaned, suddenly disengaged it, and darting forward, seized the collar of the young man, and with determined violence precipitated him several steps down the stairs, as he loudly called for a constable,

stable, while the terrified Zitella at the same moment beheld her beautiful enamelled repeater, and her purse, drop from the hand of the supposed gentleman.

The voice of Lister arrested the steps of the party, who had preceded them only by a few paces, and returning instantly to his aid, they beheld the stranger imploring for mercy and compassion, while an acknowledgment of the intended theft, and the pleadings of *want*, disarmed the resentment of the Baronet, and deeply interested our orphan, who, with involuntary impulse, exclaimed—" He seems no common robber—do not detain him—his life may pay the forfeit; I am *rich*, and he *wants*; suffer him to keep the purse."

The romantic Euphemia now united her entreaties; and the cause of the unknown being thus warmly espoused, together with no officer of justice having yet appeared, the culprit was permitted to escape her ordeal.

The mind of Zitella had however received a shock, the amusement of the opera could

could not easily eradicate; she reflected with horror upon the criminal expedient which an unfortunate fellow-creature had so recently adopted, to secure to himself a sum so trifling, and realized in idea the actual misery to which he must have been reduced, ere such a step could have been determined upon. From this train of painful rumination she was aroused by Lady Darnford, whose thoughts had also appeared to have been any where but at the Opera House, and who, in the midst of an admired air of Catalani, exclaimed—"Did you not this morning, Zitella, when speaking of Mr. Nugent, mention him as only *one* of your guardians, and if so, may I enquire who is the other?"

"Certainly, Lord Edgeworth."

"He! Lord Edgeworth your guardian!" reiterated the former; "that mysterious character!"

"Does your Ladyship then know any thing to his disadvantage?" enquired our heroine with surprise.

"Concealed

"Concealed motives to extraordinary actions, seldom reflect well on the performer. His separation from Lady Edgeworth was unaccountably strange; he never even attempted to give the semblance of a reason for his cruelty towards a wife of unblemished fame; for even he avowed his firm conviction that she was '*chaste as ice*,' '*pure as snow*;' yet has he torn from her arms a daughter on whom she doted."

"My mother pictured him to me as a most exalted character," rejoined her auditor; "and she hesitated not to express her conviction, that just and powerful reasons must have operated to produce the event your Ladyship alludes to."

"Your mother was under obligation to Edgeworth; he had proved to her a zealous friend; for to his endeavours she was indebted for the revocation of a paternal malediction; consequently viewing him through the partial medium of grateful remembrance, her judgment was naturally biassed."

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI ... TANJORE

"The

"The idea once suggested itself, but upon what ground I cannot exactly analyse, that an attachment had formerly subsisted on his side to my deceased parent."

"That was an error of imagination," returned the Countess, "for to my certain knowledge, friendship alone was the cement of their confidential intercourse. Your father was the only being beloved by the one, and Lady Edgeworth professedly and apparently the only object her Lord's heart had ever acknowledged."

"I have a very vivid curiosity to behold her," said Zitella, "I had almost said interest, but that I feared your Ladyship might think the latter term bordered on the romance of feeling, when applied to an individual, of whom I have even so recently heard."

"The curiosity, or the interest, may then be instantaneously gratified, for the next box presents its object; you will distinguish her as dressed peculiarly in the Indian style, which fashion now admits, without

without its appearing so singular as it once did, though, upon recollection, she was the individual who first introduced that costume."

Zitella directed her view to the personified theme of conversation; nor was she inclined speedily to withdraw from so fine a contemplation. At the moment of survey, the whole soul of the eastern beauty seemed wrapt in the Cecilian sounds of a Catalani! an enthusiasm wholly unaffected gave lustre to her fine features, and the *fierté* of her darkly luminous eyes was mellowed by an harmonic influence, that diffused even a tender radiance of feeling over her expressive countenance.

"In that perfection-modelled form," exclaimed Lady Darnford, "you trace the daughter of an Indian princess, who, in wedlock, became lawfully linked to the victor of her liberty, an Asian tempting the gallant general."

"Nature seems to have created her as peculiarly adapted to grace her ancestral

throne," rejoined the former; "were an artist anxious to personify Majesty, he need only copy the noble lineaments which present themselves in this sovereign of beauty."

"And the soul," added the Countess, "bears correspondent impression; for her virtues all partake of royal excellence; her address is strikingly conciliating, yet it breathes the condescension of a princess; she can be affable, but never familiar, for her urbanity is the graciousness of a monarch; it invites confidence, regard, and respect, but it never equalizes; her generosity borders on munificence; the most trifling of her actions is impregnated with a magnanimity, which proclaims the inherent grandeur of that temperament from which they flow. The tenants of the Edgeworth estates adore and worship their noble benefactress, yet they tremble in the presence of so much majesty. Those even on the footing of equality in this country, as the wives of English peers, are involuntarily

tarily distanced, by that august dignity of mien which lives in Lady Edgeworth; while her every action, her every sentiment, is impregnated with the most condescending courtesy; and even her superiors in worldly rank appear to imbibe an intuitive emotion of respect, and administer an unsolicited deference. This exalted being is formed to inspire adoration, rather than the more tender sentiments of love, to become the idol, rather than the mistress of her admirers, since she rather personifies the goddess, than the angel of a lover's fancy. You are surprised to hear me declaim thus energetically, but *malgré* natural inclination, the arrow of ridicule drops from my paralysed hand, when pointed at so resplendent an object; the substance is too solid for it to penetrate, and I feel the weapon would only recoil on her who winged the shaft. Malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness, hide their diminished heads in the presence of this lofty excellence; she towers above their calumniating produce,

produce, and stands erect in conscious supremacy, on the firmest ground, universal respect, so seldom the portion of a separated wife—a respect which has been strikingly justified by the asseverations of Lord Edgeworth, in regard to his own perfect conviction of the chastity of her *whole* life, and the strict propriety of her wedded conduct. Mysterious, unaccountable man! thy actions baffle the searching eye of the most curious, when it seeks to develop their source: years have rolled on, but to cast over thy course a cloud yet more dark and inscrutable."

"Ah!" exclaimed Euphemia, who had marked the subject of their conversation, "could he see the cloud which obscures that majesty of beauty in its gloomy mass, even his adamantine heart must feel! Ah! how supremely refulgent does the lofty Juno rise, when her immortal soul oft seems to tower above the reach of fate to subdue!"

"For once, young lady, you have embraced

braced a subject well adapted to the region of hyperbole, therefore let it pass without animadversion," said the Countess.

"Hapless, unfortunate woman," rejoined Sir Horace, "rather would I compare her to the drooping vine of Juvenal,

"Torn from the embraces of the elm she lov'd!"

"Sacrilegious monster!" ironically retorted Lady Darnford. "Pray, my good Sir, do you intend to play the part of a second Ovid, by thus metamorphosing the queen of the clouds into a Bacchanalian sprig? The Bond-street Ovid, I declare," she added, surveying him with a look most provokingly ridiculous, "and worthy, most worthy of the fashionable sphere which gave birth to thy fanciful flight! But hither approaches Rationality, in the form of a brother Baronet, Sir Edward Horton; I consequently hand you over to your kindred soul, the soft subduing Euphemia, and, in return, request you will

make

make room for this more assimilated personage to entertain me."

Sir Horace complied, and Horton obtained a seat between the Countess of Darnford and Lady Zitella Herbert, which at once interrupted the theme of conversation. Sir Edward had in fact, from the moment of entering the box, pressed forward towards our heroine, with that assiduous attention which marks a wish to render the attempt apparent to that female who is the immediate object of the endeavour. With the sight of this young man, however, the remembrance of his conversation with Mrs. Nugent was connected, and an unqualified indulgence of that *hauteur*, to which we must confess the mind of our heroine naturally prone, was the consequence; but this *hauteur* insensibly lessened, so much of almost magic conciliation lived in the manner and conversation of Sir Edward; while the strong judgment which marked his observations, and the

discrimination

discrimination of his sentiments, bore the strong unerring testimonials of a firm and vigorous understanding.

As the party removed to the coffee-room to await the arrival of the carriages, our orphan accepted his proffered arm to assist her through the crowd, Lady Darnford having taken that of Cuthbert, and Euphemia having most dexterously contrived to compel the exclusive attentions of Lister.

In the midst of the promiscuous throng, who presented a mass of incongruity, from the decrepid female shining with jewelled plumes, to the beardless boy, first launching upon this ocean of dissipation, one individual, even in that innumerable world of beings, struck the eye of our heroine, as preeminently conspicuous; it was no other than Lord Arthur Craven, whose almost Herculean stature was formed on nature's boldest scale, and displayed a symmetry of colossal perfection, on which the eyes rested with mingled admiration

and astonishment. His towering height gained still more from a lofty carriage, his strongly marked brows gave an earnest of the energy of his mental powers; while in his eyes there spoke an expression so intelligent, so full of fire, and of genius, that a spectator never saw the possibility of criticising either their form or colour; no feature could boast the exact proportion of a critic's mould, but the union glowed with a warmer, more vivid attraction, than the cold precision of analyzed regularity; it was a countenance that Minerva might have modelled, in rivalship to the powers of Venus; so much of soul then dwelt within that face, each particular *trait* was buried in the brilliance of the whole.

On one side of his open and commanding forehead, stood the emblem of distinguished heroism, a scar gained on Spanish ground, in the memorable battle of Corunna, where valour had shone personified in Britain's vaunted noble, the gallant Craven! it was a glorious memorial of

fame,

fame, it was as a tablet that recalled to the spectator's mind the individual intrepidity of patriotic zeal. Lord Arthur was not insensible to the interesting ornament, and the glossy sable of his hair afforded no shade to the distinguished appendage of his temple.

Is it then strange that such an object should at once engage the temporary survey, or rather the enthusiastic admiration, of Zitella? or that, having once beheld him, the same eyes should again and again turn, although at distance, to contemplate a work so majestically grand; but, alas! disappointment must be invariably combined with humanity; and let this axiom, reader, prepare you for the interior complexion of so fine a shell; since *Nature* is my subject, I would seek to draw originals, but they must prove the originals of her prolific hoard, and perfection is not the lot of mortality.

"Who is that new face?" indolently

inquired Craven, of the companion on whose arm he leaned.

"Do you not know, eh?" returned a voice, that would have proclaimed Beechey, had he possessed the power of invisibility; "why it appertains to no less a personage than the daughter of the late Earl of Darnford, the *golden* idol for the winter, alias an *Heiress*."

"And therefore established as such, by the code of fortune-hunters, I presume," replied the former.

"A household divinity!" retorted Beechey; "is not that a suitable term for the hymeneal attractor, eh?"

"Yes," said Lord Arthur, "and like most idols, to be laid upon the shelf, when the hour of worship is past."

"A damned fine girl, 'pon my soul!" ejaculated a third, who had been attentively examining the subject of debate through an opera-glass, "one of the most palatable gilded pills I have seen this lustrum—a cursed good matrimonial drug."

A fair

A faint smile passed over the features of Zitella, as the latter speech alone reached her ear in crossing the vicinity of the trio, while she affected to be wholly engrossed in listening to an anecdote of Horton, to avoid the appearance of being moved by this painful stricture; but her eyes were bent on the ground, she dared not raise them, for they were filled with tears—tears exclusively appertaining to the painful feelings of an heiress, conscious of being surveyed merely as the golden prize of those mercenary adventurers with which the octagon was no doubt thronged.

The eyes of Craven pursued her with unqualified admiration, and rising from his supinely lounging posture, with sudden energy he exclaimed—"Present me, Beechey; I must positively be presented *a la hâte;* she is absolutely worth the trouble of a bow; but really the constant recognition of an *ugly* woman is one of the fatigues of life; surely it would be good policy to be observed among that

 description

description of females, never to remind us they are in existence, by the renewal of that odious curtsying ceremony, whenever they approach within a mile of their male acquaintance; faith, a bow to *la laide* is quite an obligation."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Lady Darnford, who had by the crowd been absolutely impelled into the vicinity of these tonish heroes. "Indeed!" she repeated sarcastically; "and what is yet more marvellous, Lord Arthur, *I* for one have been hitherto wholly insensible of the obligation for which you have so long considered me your debtor; in fact, I never before heard of the bowing tax, unless you regard the stamp duty upon hats as emblematical," she continued laughing; "but be this as it may, I am willing to cancel one favour by the performance of another, that of taking upon myself the presentation you have solicited of Mr. Beechey; and by this procedure I intend for once obliging each party, as I really think you will afford a

precious

precious subject for amusement to my young relative."

"You know me, my Lady," languidly returned Craven, fixing his fine intellectual eyes on the cieling, with an air of affected vacancy; "you know me," he repeated in a still more listless tone. "I therefore offer no apology for my dreadful slander on a small part of that sex I adore, not at that moment intended to reach a female ear, or if it had, I felt conscious it could never be applied to any here."

"You say most truly; I do indeed know you, my Lord, and I never before considered knowledge as thrown away."

"To communicate knowledge under any form to your Ladyship, would be flattering," rejoined the other; "but I can only wonder, since you regret its possession, that you encountered the trouble of acquiring it."

"I can solve that difficulty at once," resumed the Countess, "for I was stimulated to the exertion by the expected

 gratification

gratification of turning that knowledge to account, by amusing myself at the expence of exposing your folly."

"But you were perhaps, my Lady, not aware that your own wisdom might be called in question, in wasting time by the analyzation of a mere camelion; for, like the object of the sage disputants of old, while you are representing me under one description, I may in a moment appear of a totally different hue; but *n'emporte*, I shall always feel happy to be distinguished by the observation of the Countess of Darnford, and braving sarcasm, will consider myself honoured in being made known to that fair relative, who shines the evening star of this little world."

The speaker bowed, with even Chesterfieldian grace, the insolent tone of modish puppyism, as if by magic, vanished, and all the elegance of the most polished refinement diffused additional radiance over his supremely noble person.

"Thou art determined to prove the

correctness of thy late assertion, oh man of inconsistency! it is however but justice that reward should attend the dexterous transmigration, and a Columbine be invoked to greet her Harlequin; but in the interim, suffer me to advise you to apply to the manager of one of our pantomimic theatres for employment; I will promise you all my interest and recommendation; for I really think you will be quite *au fait* in the childish amusement of farcical versatility, for which thy camelion genius is so admirably adapted."

Lady Darnford had taken the arm of her auditor, as she concluded this speech, and they immediately advanced towards our heroine, who was within view, having been separated from the Countess by the pressure of the crowd.

The presentation succeeded; Lord Arthur barely bent his head, to acknowledge its performance, with a half inclination, that rather appeared as the apology for a bow, than the intention of offering one;

and resting his arm on an ebony opera cane, in that attitude indolently surveyed our lovely orphan, without the utterance of a single syllable.

"The heat and crowd are very great," said Zitella, who felt the necessity of breaking an awkward silence, and yet, perhaps, had never experienced greater disinclination to speak.

"You think so, do you?" returned the incorrigible Arthur, with profound gravity.

Zitella regarded him with surprise; his eyes had first glanced over herself, but the next moment appeared moving over half a dozen others, without the appearance of seeing either.

"My observation," she rejoined with a half smile, "was rather addressed to your Lordship's feelings than your thoughts."

"Did you speak?" he suddenly enquired, after a full minute's pause; "I fancied I heard you giving utterance to some observation; was it myself you intended

tended to honour by addressing? for in truth I was thinking, reflecting upon a circumstance, rather curious in its way, which took place a few days since."

"My ideas certainly did not follow the direction of your Lordship, for upon the present occasion I cannot boast of being absent when present."

"Really that is very considerate."

"Not so much so," she returned with quickness, "as appears necessary; for I did not intend wholly to support conversation, or to utter a soliloquy: but *Novelty*, although it may not always charm, will sometimes *amuse*, and all I at present meet with, attaches to itself that recommendation."

"And, therefore, by great good fortune, I may perhaps even charm your Ladyship, by my propensity to approach her standard."

"But," resumed Zitella, "although we may for a moment gaze in stupid wonder at her sometimes incomprehensible whims,

yet her fascinations, even if we allow them existence, can only be temporary; and when by becoming familiar, she loses her zest, where can her powers be renovated?"

"At the shrine of Variety."

"Yes, my Lord; but Novelty will soon drain the treasures of her mind, and with the loss of her ally, sink into oblivion."

"The coffers of Folly are more amply supplied than you imagine," replied Craven, "and Novelty need never fear the bankruptcy of this inexhaustible mine."

"It is well, as your Lordship observes, that the mine is inexhaustible, or the frequent demands of her votaries would long since have drained her stores: but has she no opponent in these regions? does Common Sense never enter the lists, or is she too firmly established on her throne, to fear the approach of that which may menace her existence?"

"Oh, she is a departed spirit!" replied Craven, "unquiet, perhaps, from having

experienced an unnatural death, and appears only at times, to terrify her murderers into remembrance of their crime."

"You have annihilated, by the last sentence, what the preceding one had given to hope, that a phœnix would arise, to save future generations from a lasting memento of the frivolities of our day; for if the shade be so terrific, a second massacre would be all we could expect from such an event as I have alluded to."

"The *spirit* of Common Sense," said Craven, "must in fact be immortal, and human power can only banish her in *propria persona;* the little elf yet sports in airy gambols; the *material* part alone is annihilated."

"And the rest is *immaterial,* I indeed believe," returned Zitella, "for it does not seem to infringe, in any respect, on the laws of Fashion's court."

"And pray how long," interrupted the Countess, "has your Ladyship been initiated in the code of that world? your

aptitude

aptitude in learning it, has indeed been astonishingly great."

"I claim, as you, my Lady, justly observe, but recent knowledge; but I have already studied under so many tutors of this individual branch, that I should have disgraced my indefatigable instructors, if I had not attained some proficiency; for I presume we rally to our old standard, and consider fashion and folly as synonymous."

"Do not be so diffident, young lady," repeated the Countess, sarcastically; "in thus yielding the whole credit to your instructors, you are unjust to your own talents, which were on the alert to receive the lesson and support of Folly."

"It is indeed a valuable staff on which to lean," resumed Zitella, "for I now discover that it may be used as an auxiliary, when every thing else would fail; I may indulge *ennui*, or even *sarcasm*, with impunity; and thus, doubly armed, may have recourse to one, when the other fails."

"I congratulate you on the acquisition," returned

returned the former; "but, in using this new auxiliary, my Lady, beware, lest like the presumptuous dervise Abdallah, thy talisman, wielded by an unskilful hand, should, like his, produce an effect contrary to thy views, and prove itself the ready punisher of the daring grasper."

"The timid bird," answered our heroine, "ere it takes wing, flutters around its straw-built nest, and tries the strength of its pinions; so I, when inclined to play with a weapon I feel so dangerous as sarcasm, will analyse with caution the powers attached to it; and if I find the latitude allowed be too wide for me safely to range in, I will renounce the attempt, and again sink into the listless insipidity of *ennui*; for of the two extremes, surely the latter is the most *harmless*."

"No, fair nymph," exclaimed Sir Horace Lister, who, with Euphemia, had rejoined them during the latter speech, "in vain would you seek by any attempt to become *harmless*; enveloped in the soporific

vapour of *ennui*, we should hail the destructive arrow, when pointed by the spirit of the cloud."

"And a clouded spirit it would be, in every sense," retorted Lady Darnford. "But hither comes my dispatch, Sir Edward, to proclaim, no doubt, the arrival of our carriages; therefore, as a punishment, Lord Arthur, for your libel on ugly women, I command you to take charge of one of the sect, which I really believe is the greatest revenge I can inflict on a modish beau; so *allons*, my reluctant knight, lead me forward."

Her young companions, escorted by their respective *cecisbei*, followed the lead; and our heroine soon beheld herself once more within the mansion of the nabob. Mrs. Nugent had retired for the night, and she willingly followed her example; but rest did not diffuse its balm around her pillow; reflection annihilated its influence; one object alone haunted her imagination; it was not the romantic Lister, it was not the

the entertaining, polished Horton, nor yet the admired Craven, that idol of woman's adoration; ah no! it was the form of the unhappy elegant stranger, which floated in mental vision; and self-reproach mingled with this retrospect, that she had not bestowed upon his miseries, what her heart had dictated.

Leaving her to the indulgence of these reflections, we must direct the reader's attention to the birth, parentage, and pursuits of an individual, whom this chapter has already introduced to their acquaintance, the supremely handsome, the brilliant, the admired, the distinguished Craven!

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

"Disorder'd praise,
The wish but half express'd, the ardent gaze,
The varying cheek, the frequent smother'd sigh,
Reveal'd the latent meaning of his eye."

As o'er my palm the silver piece she drew,
And trac'd the line of life with searching view,
How throbb'd my fluttering pulse with hopes and fears
To learn the colour of my future years!

ROGERS.

Notoriety, Love, and Honour.

THE Duke of Somerton was a man of little understanding, and still less talent, while his younger brother, our present hero, had, from

from the early dawn of infant faculty, been proclaimed the genius of the family. His widowed mother idolized this son, from a proud sense of having given birth to such an offspring: his more distant relatives blazoned forth the astonishing abilities of this junior branch of the noble house of Somerton; and many even openly avowed their regret that he was not the heir of its hereditary honours.

Soon the young stripling caught the flattering incense, and placed his own native abilities upon an elevated pinnacle; perseverance was banished from his studies; the more abstruse parts of literature he deigned not to apply himself to attain; while he sought with avidity, and gained with ease, all that was dazzling and brilliant, for these alone seemed in his eyes worthy attention; more useful knowledge was despised, and only to the higher paths of science would he direct his powers: ambitious of distinction, and yet too indolent for application, he would at times suffer

suffer his mind to sink into total inactivity; but, was a scholastic prize, or a collegiate distinction, suspended before him, then with ardent impetuosity he bent all the fire of genius and of intellect, to aid the emulative combat of mental power, when Craven always proudly claimed the tributary incitement for his own; but to shine in the courtly world, the young noble soon found other attractions necessary, and to *shine* was the beacon of his ambition.

The enthusiast of female beauty, this youth sought to bow his very idols into slaves; his love was at that period passion, not sentiment; it was unbinding, jealous, and tyrannical; it was a kind of self-love, composed of vanity and unfettered inclination; and although triumph even here attended him, he sickened at the very frailty which gave completion to his wishes: but the heart of the youthful rover was still unsatisfied, since in yielding to his senses, he had waged war with his feelings—for feelings Lord Arthur did pos-

ess,

sess—feelings nature had destined for virtues, but contradictory circumstances had perverted them into somewhat less stable, less respectable.

At the age of twenty-five, the dissipated Craven experienced all the *ennui* of disgust; for his vitiated conduct, all the tedium of unprofitable and meretricious pleasure; it was then he turned his thoughts to the more rational search for a domestic partner, one who might concentrate all those wayward capricious inclinations into one object, and cement a lasting affection. The pursuit was rational, but to be rational in its execution, was wholly incompatible with the disposition of the pursuer. Vanity, the most consummate, bore sovereign sway in the breast of Lord Arthur; and he could not acknowledge, as his future wife, her who did not administer food to this passion, by reflecting a brilliance on his conquest; the shining attributes of beauty, accomplishments, birth, and intellect, were the indispensables sought, and the more

solid

solid virtues of the heart were little investigated.

A female surrounded with these auxiliaries, Lord Arthur found; and to this united assemblage of attraction, the homage of his heart was tendered; and could the noble suitor doubt of success in his novel project? for the object of adulation from his cradle, the boasted miracle of childhood, the astonishing produce of adolescence, and the admired idol of the fashionable world, in the more advanced stages of manhood, can we wonder that a doubt of his ability to secure the hand of any woman, whose affections he deigned to court, never once entered the imagination of this modern lover?

Alas! his Lordship had then to learn, that superior rank and wealth were rivals, that could successfully cope with his individual attractions, however powerful, and even in the present instance, to gain the sovereignty; for, while the imperious Noble delayed in openly avowing his intentions

to the fair object of a long-established flirtation, the smiling receiver of his attentions dared to make another election; the Duke of Somerton, that very brother whom he had been early taught to view with contemptuous superiority, bore off in triumph the famed beauty of Craven's temporary idolatry.

High swelled the imperious spirit of the arrogant Arthur; such a rival was the one on earth the most galling to his native pride; that warm admiration, to which fancy alone had extended the metamorphosing semblance of love, faded with what he deemed the inconstancy of its object; but vanity suffered a severe shock; he inveighed against the sex, with a warmth that evinced such strong resentment, as was accepted by the young Duchess for flattering homage; and she rather sought to point out the effects of her inconstancy to notice, that she might display the disappointment of a lover, whose partiality was calculated

calculated to raise her charms in public estimation.

This conduct mortified and disgusted still more the *ci-devant* admirer, even to induce his quitting that scene, where she reigned empress of the day; and he determined upon visiting the western part of Ireland, to fulfil a promise of passing some weeks with a friend, recently married.

The mental attractions, the apparent innocence, the interesting diffidence of the lovely bride, once more decked the vision of connubial bliss in dazzling colours: the sanguine temperament of the ardent Craven once more painted woman as the supreme dispenser of happiness; he sighed to realize that paradise the domestic mansion of his friend presented, himself the reigning lord of a similar domain, and blessed with a second Maria!

Oh, man! man! the mighty arbiter of reason, how impotent is thy judgment, when thus easily obscured by the film of

of female beauty! wrapt in this magic covert, even the analyser of intellectual genius, of mind, pourtrayed upon the 'human face divine,' mistook the vivid colouring of gratified vanity at the admiring gaze, for the blush of retiring modesty; the soft voluptuous fall of the downcast eyelids, for the timid tenderness of bashful innocence; the tremulous hand which met thine, for the agitation of her novel situation; with delighted gaze, thy view dwelt upon a form clad in captivation; thine heart experienced something indefinably mournful, in witnessing the happiness of thy friend, and, whilst it breathed a warm and fervent prayer, that felicity unalloyed and unceasing might result from his recent connexion, a sigh mingled in the wish—a sigh of regret that Heaven had not formed a sister excellence; yet no unhallowed sentiment dared attach to the wife of thy friend; the partner of his connubial hours was to thee an object the most sacred; but thy energetic soul knew

 not

not to conceal its vivid admiration; accustomed to yield unchecked indulgence to thy every feeling, the controul of disguise was incompatible with thy nature.

Maria received the flattering incense with winning softness, while the fond husband experienced renewed pleasure in his friend's approbation of his election; for alas! he knew not that the being to whom his honour had become delegated, held the sacred bonds of wedlock in contempt, and regarded this human institution as a mere political covert for unlicensed passion.

The pupil of a devotee to the Wolstoncraftian school, Maria had imbibed the most dangerous of its tenets; a voluptuary in sentiment and in soul, the young wife had, from convenience, embraced the name of Stavenant, that she might, with less fear of the world's opprobrium, indulge in the depravity of her own inclinations; the courage of established vice was alone wanting to enable her to defy the slowly-moving finger of scorn, which the

universal

universal hand points at the degraded victim of passion, when exposed to public knowledge.

With an understanding dangerously refined in baneful sophistry, Maria gave to sensuality all the witchery of Persian softness, to passion all the delusion of sentiment, and to amorousness all the tenderness of interest; her every look breathed love, but it was a love so timid, and so sweet in its expression, that delicacy seemed to gain but an auxiliary; her voice was harmonious and dulcet, it seldom rose beyond a whisper, so delicate and so clear, that Cupid would have recognized the sound amid a thousand contending voices.

Lord Arthur listened to the witching accents, with an admiration each converse heightened, for the mind of Maria was no senseless blank of imbecility; her lips were at once the seat of beauty and the vehicles of intellect; but her heart was the perverted, degraded counterpoise to all her manifold

 attractions;

attractions; this heart was however as yet veiled to the view of Craven, and he believed her the spotless representative of female perfection, while Maria beheld in him the object which stimulated her powers to exertion; the fire and energy of that soul, which yielding force and animation to every word, of thought, or deed, rendered him an individual of resistless attraction; and each winning encouragement was tendered that art could devise, to incite the passionate tenderness of the lover, and yet elude the ken of a husband's eye.

For awhile Lord Arthur was insensible to those sentiments of somewhat more than preference, that, once kindled, became each day more vivid, in the breast of the young, though vitiated wife; the thought of an attachment, dangerous to the peace or felicity of his friend, had never for an instant sullied the mind of Craven; his heart was the seat of honour, and happy

had it been for his future welfare, had he earlier known and fled the dangerous enchantress.

Some weeks had passed, and still Craven lingered in the county of Wicklow, where the unsuspecting Stavenant sought to detain him yet longer; when in the course of a morning walk, as the new-made pair, accompanied by their friend, were returning from placing an addition, which the latter had presented to the well-assorted aviary of Castle Stepney, their attention was attracted by the approach of a servant on horseback, who, directing his course to the avenue they had just entered, alighted, and presented a letter to Mr. Stavenant, whose eyes having glanced over the contents, he with a half smile exclaimed—" There is a joke upon poor Benedict; our friend Roblyn professes his earnest desire to tempt me from thy side, my fair; but modestly conceiving his own powers would fail, when put in opposition to yours, only

 hints

hints at a stag-hunt to-morrow, and wishes it were possible for me to join it."

"For once," returned Maria, "I will aid his cause; it is not right I should wholly monopolize you; and our friend here, he too would have some cause of complaint, if I only consulted my own gratification. I have not forgotten you both enjoy the pleasures of the chace; therefore accept Sir Willoughby's invitation; and with the aid of music and of Marmion, I shall not be lost in *ennui*, although deprived for the whole day of my cheerful companions."

As neither gentleman started an objection, the engagement was formed, and arrangements made for their being on horseback at an early hour.

At ten the next day, Mrs. Stavenant's *dejeuné* was a solo; but neither music nor the picture of Flodden-field succeeded, for in truth we must acknowledge the whole mind of Maria was enveloped by a far different pursuit; it was fixed upon one of the

the absentees; yet that one was certainly not her wedded lord; already had her wandering imagination selected for its unlicensed contemplation, the seductive attractions of Craven!

The day wore apace; but still thought dwelt on its favourite object, until the closing hour of sober grey. At this very hour, a gentle ring at the gate announced the approach of an humble suppliant for admission: she had risen from her seat, and from no better motive than mere curiosity, had approached the window, when, to her no small surprise, she discovered Lord Arthur walking up the lawn alone, while the servant was leading his horse towards the stables. No fears were awakened for her absent lord in the bosom of Maria, no, for each avenue was filled by its new inmate; she abruptly quitted the anti-drawing-room, where she had been sitting, and ran up to her toilette, for consultation upon appearances.

In the interim, Craven had entered the

recently deserted room: this apartment had, in fact, been furnished under the immediate direction of its fair mistress, although, for obvious reasons, she permitted her upholsterer to engross the nominal merit of the taste displayed. It was hung with white velvet lined with pink, and bordered with roses and myrtle entwined. Candles, except in shade, were excluded; a terge transparent lamp, beautifully designed by Cipriani, with Venus rising from the sea, while her attendant nymphs and graces, equally divested of attire, sported in airy gambols around her; over the chimney were two others, by the same masterly hand, the one representing the birth of love, while its companion pictured the cup of delight; in the centre was a clock of the most curious and beautiful workmanship, formed after the model of a Parisian original; it personified the Hours encircling a figure of Time, and a laughing Cupid was playfully twisting myrtle round his scythe; beneath the pendulum, a motto

of

of Voltaire was inscribed, as expressive of the signification of the fanciful device.

"Tout le consume, et l'amour seul l'emploie."

Over this was suspended a drawing of exquisite beauty; the design was simple, but impressively striking, from the merit of the execution. A weeping *Cupid* was represented as receiving his arrows from the hand of *Destiny*, whose stern unrelenting countenance was finely contrasted by the tender anguish of acute feeling painted in the ardent boy, whose supplicating eyes eloquently spoke; and so admirably had the artist pourtrayed agitation, that his form seemed almost to tremble on the canvas.

An overpowering emotion struck the soul of Craven as he surveyed this picture, and he recoiled with involuntary dread from the analyzation of his throbbing heart; he turned abruptly from its contemplation, and sought a less vivid subject from the painter's pencil; but nought pre-

sented itself but those delineations calculated to inflame the passions, and seduce the senses. An approaching step was heard; his frame trembled; it was agitated; that nerve of his heart was awakened, sacred to *individual* love; that nerve, heretofore untouched, was now alive to the most dangerous sensations: he quaffed a voluptuous draught from this luxurious fountain of art—its effect overwhelmed his reason; he had no longer power to resist the influence of the seducing poison; he sunk beneath the canopy of a French sofa, from which Maria had so recently risen; near it stood a harp, and upon a fan table lay the Italian air of "*Ah Quanto Anima!*" he remembered, alas! too well, that the day before the lovely Maria had enchanted him with this very song; he placed himself in the spot she had so lately pressed; he touched the strings of the musical instrument, he fancied she had just quitted; he resigned himself to a dream of luxurious enchantment! Oh

dream

dream of fatal indulgence! Oh vision of perishable ecstacy! unfortunate, infatuated Craven, thou reflectedst not that the extremes of pleasure border on the confines of pain, and in yielding to this unlicensed delirium of heated imagination, perverted fancy, thou wert doomed to pay the penalty of retributive anguish!

* * * * * * *

Maria entered: her dress had been new modelled for the occasion; a light muslin drapery covered, but did not conceal, the symmetry of her limbs, which, though *petit*, possessed that beautiful roundness only to be afforded by a certain degree of *embon-point*, so dear to the voluptuous or Italian lover; her bosom was only partly veiled by the lace which was drawn round, at the edge of her robe of softest texture; her hair, lovely from nature, and fashioned by art, was simply fastened to display it to the best advantage; her arms were, in compliance with the taste of the day, bared almost to the shoulder; while the

the dark-haired armlet contrasted with the delicate colour of the part it adorned; the sweetest perfumes of Asia scented the air; all breathed dangerous luxurious enchantment. The Circe smiled upon her unexpected visitor, and her beaming eyes, fraught with the winning tenderness of her voluptuous heart, read her triumph in the countenance of her victim. He attempted to address her, but for the first time his lips refused to pronounce the appellation of "*Stavenant*;" yet the attempt evinced its recollection, and checked the ardent gaze, directed to the Maria of his heart, as he memorized the name of his friend.

"It was particularly kind in you, my Lord, to become the bearer of a message, which, being delivered incautiously, might indeed have caused me considerable terror. The note you have sent me from Stavenant simply says, 'a slight accident' prevents his return to-night, but of what nature he does not particularize, though as both his hand and yours assure me the

inconvenience is not great, I trust his return will not be delayed longer than to-morrow."

"The hurt, my dear Madam," he returned, almost fearfully taking her extended hand, and placing her upon the sofa beside him, "is in reality as slight as has been represented; in alighting from his horse, the animal being somewhat impatient of controul, he has sprained his ancle, which, although not likely to be of any consequence, is yet sufficiently painful to prevent his moving with any convenience to himself; he has therefore delegated me as his representative;" and he ventured to press to his lips the hand he yet held.

The face of the fair Maria was instantly averted, although her hand was not withdrawn; the mellowed light thrown over the room by the subdued glare of the candles, the gilded canopy, supported by Cupids, the Eolian harp, whose softened notes were heard from the adjoining room, the imprudently retained hand, the ideal

paradise

paradise of Love's votaries, in the pictured scenery around him, the mild radiance of Maria's eyes fixed upon him, as if unconsciously they were so, all united to attune his feelings to the most impassioned tenderness.

"I have been engaged with drawing," said the soft voice of the too captivating beauty, "since left to my solo meditations, and I am anxious for your Lordship's opinion to guide the completion of the sketch; therefore I believe I must suffer self-interest to supersede my apprehensions of your criticism;" and she raised the picture from a table. "Doubtless you have read the tale whence the subject is taken? Love and Humility."

The colouring was only partly finished, but sufficiently so, to give full effect to the portrait of Leucothoe, under which was written that well-known sentence,

"Ah! what is friendship, when we ask for love?"

The figure of the Grecian slave was adorned

adorned with all the beauty the imagination of the enthusiastic artist could express, and the tender Leucothoe lived warm in painting as in print: Fancy had embraced, however, a wider field for its range, than was perhaps exactly accordant to the writer's sketch.

The enamoured fair was reclining beneath an umbrageous shade; disregarded by her side lay the symbol of friendship, while her despairing eyes, fraught with luxurious fondness, were raised towards a sylphid Cupid, who was retreating, as he pointed maliciously to Aciloe, who, dressed in the vestments of slavery, was winnowing corn in the field of his master. Lord Arthur sought to offer a tributary compliment to the talent of the fair artist, but for the first time, in giving utterance to the praises of Maria, he was certainly not *au fait* in his expressions. The speech, however, such as it was, drew forth a smile of diffident gratification from Mrs. Stavenant, and delicately turning the embar-

rassed encomium, she reverted to the romance of D'Israeli.

"Of this small collection, the one from which I have ventured to select a subject appears to me by far the most beautiful. There is a wider range in the enthusiasm of passion in Meyjoure; but in this, the sentiment of love flows with sweetest fascination, feeling lives in each word, and there is a subtilized tenderness of diction, that glides imperceptibly to the bosom, without arousing the more turbulent passions."

"It is but the more dangerous," returned Craven, with a sigh he had no power to repress; "reason wages a natural war with passion, but tenderness entwines it with soporific embrace; there is a luxuriousness in the softer ebullitions of love, more destructive to the powers of the soul than open assault; it is subjugated without alarm: when I perused the fine-toned affections of a Meyjoure's Leila, I became wrapt in a delirium of passionate admiration;

admiration; I felt even as if transported into the character; I felt, had I that famed mistress, I would have loved as ardently as him; I embraced, in fullest sympathy, all the energy of heart that can give zest to its existence, and at that moment, I had voluntarily become a wandering maniac, to be loved by Leila: the fire of Persian imagery unfitted me for the cold temperature of common life, and I purchased, by the gratification of an hour's luxury, many a successive one of discontent, of distaste for the pleasures of forged methodical reason, and, like a child who cries for the starry lights of heaven, I could have wept over the reflection, that I should never behold the phantom of imagination personified in life! I even upbraided nature for the gift of a heart formed to feel the immortality of love, and yet denied the ability to have the fire and energy of that heart called into action!"

"Nor is the language of '*Love and Humility*' deficient in energy," said Mrs.

Stavenant,

Stavenant, "else I confess it could never have interested me. What a melancholy fascination of tenderness is there in the soft affection of the unassuming slave! how admirably has the delineator blended the feminine delicacy of the truly noble mind, the just pride of an exalted nature, with the yet devoted love of Leucothoe! we never for a moment experience contempt for the individual who loves, without the hope of reciprocity; we are fascinated by the strength of an attachment, indivisible in its nature, resistless in power, repressed by modest endeavour, and visible only from its excess. Ah! how senseless, how pitiable must the state of that heart be, that would not sigh with this hapless slave, that would not with a tear bedew the memory of the chaste timidity of her love! Ah! who would not exclaim, friendship were indeed a cold return, an unjust detraction from the rights of such an object? yes, I can realize it all," she added, while the enthusiasm of a bosom

voluptuously warm, diffused a glow of love over her heavenly complexion—"Yes, I can realize it all; I can——"

"No, my lovely friend, no," interrupted the agitated Craven, "you can never realize the situation of Leucothoe, for you can never love with a doubt of reciprocity."

Maria raised her eyes to those of the unfortunate victim; it was a look no expression but the eyes could convey; it was not pregnant with love in itself, but it was calculated to arouse it in another; it was too timidly eloquent, to create that disgust, the unlicensed amorous gaze must ever convey to the truly virtuous bosom; but there was a fearful warmth, which, in moving the senses, reached the heart.

"I am not a Leila!" faintly sounded on the lips of the enchantress.

Craven started; his very soul trembled, subjugated by female power. The pictured Leila had indeed been Maria! but not a wish

a wish had dared extend to the wife of his friend; he contemplated her, in truth, as he did the ethereal beauties of heaven, placed on an unattainable height, from which an insuperable barrier for ever separated him.

Enthusiasm was in his tone, the full force of native ardour in his countenance, as he energetically pronounced—" No, thou art indeed no Leila, for thou art doomed to tread the paths of life, happier, far happier; thy Kais is to thee the partner of thy days; linked in rosy fetters, love crowned the Hymen of Stavenant and his Maria."

The voice of Craven faltered; he was conscious that it did so; a wild imperfect terror heightened the warning pulsation of his heart, as for the first time he paused in an intended panegyric on his friend!

The drawing dropt from the hand of the youthful sorceress! her voice was mellowed to the most seductive tones of love,

as she faintly enquired if he conceived "this excess of attachment a reality, or only a Persian romance?"

"A reality, doubtless!" returned Craven; "for most truly is it '*the cordial drop which Heaven in our cup hath thrown*;' but that *you* should tender the query does indeed surprise me, you who certainly evidence the truth of my assertion!"

A melancholy despondence gave still more seducing power to the fascinating Maria, and her heaving bosom marked painful emotion, as she replied—"No, I would rather seek to believe the glowing tints of d'Israeli the mere flight of poetic licence; save on paper, I would wish to imagine the impossibility of such energetic sentiment, to admire it only as an ideal excellence; for I should else feel, acutely feel, how inferior is that which I have known for a husband."

"Impossible!" ejaculated Craven, "impossible! a creature such as the one before me, blest with all the attractions of mind and

and person, cannot inspire, without partaking of the vivid flame of love! it beams at this moment in thine eyes, subdued," he added, as if wishing to check his own impetuous manner, "by the mild radiance of virtuous modesty."

"There was a time," resumed the syren, "when I was the enthusiastic believer in this passion, when, with youthful fervour, ere yet a husband had a claim to regard, I would ejaculate—'*Ah! why do we yield credence to the existence of a natural attraction between inanimate substances, yet doubt that involuntary attraction connected with the heart?*' Once I was, in very romance, a *predestinarian*," Maria sighed: "It was perhaps necessary to my future happiness I should become an apostate to the creed of *destiny*, ere I became the wife of Stavenant; it was a rational connexion, for esteem was its sole basis."

"And the superstructure?"

"Esteem still; the affections of the heart are not to be influenced, or they would

would all have been centred and bowed by the marriage-yoke. An incident in early life has probably laid this foundation; I blush to repeat it; it was childish, silly, weak——"

"You arouse my interest—say what was the incident to which you allude?"

"It was reared in the hot-bed of superstition, and transplanted into the prolific soil of enthusiasm."

"I am also tinctured with the latter," replied Craven, "and think we derive many virtues from that source; perhaps you deem the enquiry as proceeding from obtrusive curiosity, but I would avow it to issue from a purer channel—your happiness is really dear to me."

"If this declaration be the genuine offspring of the heart, and not merely the assertion of the lips, you will both commiserate and condemn me for the foible I have cherished.

"At the age of thirteen, I passed a school vacation at the house of a juvenile friend,

friend, who, one day in playful *badinage*, enquired if I had ever had my fortune told? 'No, but I should like to hear it, if I had the opportunity,' I simply replied. 'The opportunity then offers itself to-morrow,' returned my companion. 'The celebrated Mrs. Williams arrived in the neighbouring village of Claverton last night, and I have sent my maid to request she will grant me an audience in the morning.' With that avidity natural to my years, I eagerly embraced the offer of accompanying her, and by six, the next day, we stole unperceived to the village. Mrs. Williams was no doubt apprized of the rank of her visitors, and was prepared accordingly, though we had agreed to pass as farmer's daughters; and I reached her chamber as my friend descended, for we were admitted singly. The few past years of my life she ran over in quick succession; detailed my musing grievances, my school afflictions, and then proceeded to the future; but ah, that future! too surely was

she

she gifted with the powers of prophecy! she correctly pourtrayed the strong affections of my mind, the enthusiasm of my heart; but when, with eager ardent expectation, and full-blossomed hope, I demanded where and how I should meet the congenial soul my imagination had already embodied in the future partner of my life, the sybil sighed, as she prophetically shook her head, 'Alas, poor child, *never* in thy *wedded* lord! rational, prudent, amiable, as will be the object of thy election, sympathy such as you fondly hope to find, will never cement the union; the softer feelings of thy heart will shrink from that connexion, formed by the colder dictates of reason; the energy of thy character will never expand, nor the budding tendrils of affection flourish, until you will too late discover the being fated to *destroy* your delusive dream of joyless vacuity, *in the dearest friend of him to whom thou wilt have been a voluntary victim of fate and circumstance.*"

 The

The eyes of the artful Circe were bent upon the agitated Craven; their expression was strong, unequivocal, their destructive power great; her swelling bosom, but half concealed beneath the lace, heaved as if impatient of the bursting sighs suppressed; her whole form trembled with emotion.

Never was there a more beautiful object to depict the enthusiasm of love, which appeared suddenly to have overleapt the barriers of discretion, ere she was aware of the deviation. Craven gazed in speechless astonishment, speechless delight; the lovely Maria retreated not from his embrace, he pressed her with ardour to his breast, he imprinted a thousand kisses on her coral lips.

"Ah! dear Maria, why had I not the prudence of Augustus, who, in his memorable interview with Cleopatra, shut his eyes while his ears were open to her accents? I am not more than mortal, and I have exposed myself to the fascinations of a divinity.

nity. But avaunt, thou fiend reflection! I am capable, oh! thou Leila of my soul, I am capable of all that enthusiasm of love thy imagination has pictured; I am that very being thou hast hitherto vainly sought; we have gone too far to hesitate; tell me then, thou beautiful enchantress, that it was indeed *myself* who has awakened the dormant affections of thy ardent soul, and let no shadowing doubt intercept the full tide of bliss."

"Ah, beloved Craven!" faintly murmured the seductive voice, "doubt with you no longer exists!" and her head sunk resistless on his throbbing breast.

The door suddenly opened; a servant entered, and silently placing something on a chair, as speedily vanished. Lord Arthur had risen from his seat, and had walked to a window, but on hearing the door again close, turned to see whether the obtruder was really gone. Heaven and earth! what were his feelings, when his eyes met the full gaze of Stavenant! A three-quarter

picture, of admirable resemblance, had been just delivered from the hands of the limner, and had been, according to his express desire, immediately carried to the lady, for whom it was intended, as an agreeable surprise.

Craven stood as if transfixed to the spot; he neither moved or spoke; in fact, he scarcely breathed; had a warning voice from Heaven arrested his senses, hardly would they have received a more electric shock.

The wily fair read her defeat in his expressive features—"Craven," she faintly pronounced.

He started into recollection; but his gaze was yet rivetted upon the senseless representation.

"Stavenant!" he at length exclaimed, apostrophizing the picture, "dear, much injured friend, forgive me, forgive the ill-fated, the already penitent transgressor!—Oh Maria, beloved Maria! pardon me the ungenerous advantage your almost unconscious

unconscious confession had given rise to! for a moment, I had dared to view thee as my own; for a moment, I had ceased to recollect thee as a wife, the wife of my confiding friend; but to remember this, I must instantly quit this dangerous spot; my senses were subdued, but honour, rectitude, and virtue, yet exist."

In uttering this, he rushed from the apartment, and Maria, in a few minutes, ceased to hear even his retreating footsteps.

CHAP. V.

For ever would the fond enthusiast rove
With Julia's spirit thro' the shadowy grove.

ROGERS.

* * * * * * * *

Ce n'est plus une ardeur dans mes veins cachée,
C'est Venus toute entiere à sa proie attachée.

PHŒDRE DE RACINE.

Valour and Fame.

THE next day, the arrival of Sir Willoughby Roblyn's carriage with the invalid, was preceded by an *avant courier,* to prevent alarm to the tender nerves of the timid Maria; and in two hours after, was followed by the affectionate husband. Cordial, and apparently mutually fervent, was the connubial embrace. Anxious enquiries were relieved

relieved by an amended account of the sprained ancle; and soon was every pain and every ill forgotten, in the society of the lovely Maria.

At length, as if but just remembered, he exclaimed—" But where is my friend? where is Craven?"

" Here is a letter," returned the lady; " this will probably inform you."

He broke the seal, and the following lines presented themselves.

" DEAR STAVENANT,

" THE arrival of a packet from England demands my immediate appearance in that metropolis, and prevents me the possibility of bidding you a personal adieu! thy fair hostess has kindly accepted my apologies, and admits the cause to plead my excuse for an abruptness in my exit, not conformable to the dictates of my heart, which urges at this moment a different acknowledgement for the

the hospitable reception and friendly attentions I have received beneath your roof; *fate*, however, has doomed otherwise; but at the moment I quit you in this unceremonious manner, be assured I am not the less sensible of your kindness, or less deserving of your regard.

"My warmest wishes will ever attend you; and when we meet again, may I witness as much happiness and wedded love, as your warm description originally presented in the early hours of Hymen's influence! Adieu, adieu!

ARTHUR CRAVEN."

In the mean time, post-horses, fair wind and weather, wafted Lord Arthur to the shores of Albion, when with less expedition, as conceiving himself more safe from temptation, he pursued his course to London; but as no actual engagement existed, nor any of the avowed reasons for this sudden return, he set out the next day for

for a morning lounge; and proceeding from his lodgings to a coffee-house, he ordered breakfast; and in the interim, taking up a newspaper, his eyes, in glancing over the announcements of the day, encountered the following paragraph—"*We have the pleasure to recognize once more in the circles of fashion the Duke of S.; having shaken off the trammels of Hymen, his Grace has once more become the magnet of attraction to the fair votaries of the saffron god. The fleet and neat-limbed Arabians of the Duke of S. paraded the Park this morning; and it would afford us pleasure to see the seat of the groom in the curricle in question, filled by one more worthy to occupy it.*"

"My brother returned!" soliloquized Lord Arthur; "what can I do better than to devote an hour to him before dinner?" but the breakfast appearing, his Lordship laid down the magazine of intelligence, and again was, in idea, transported to Ireland; he felt rejoiced at the recollection of his distance, and in some degree recon-

 ciled

ciled to himself; from the sacrifice he had offered at the shrine of offended honour, his ideas rested with greater freedom on his friend Stavenant; but of Maria he dared not indulge his tumultuous thoughts.

The meal concluded, he pursued his course to St. James's-street, and was ushered into the library of the Duke of Somerton, where he was greeted with affectionate cordiality; and in his turn, offered his congratulations upon the newly-recovered freedom of his Grace.

"Thank ye, thank ye, my good fellow," returned the latter; "but all the hints of your newspaper friend, or *his* fair friends, who would again wish to fetter my freedom, are seeds thrown away upon a barren soil; the cup of the saffron-robed god shall never meet my lips, never will I bow to the yoke; I will profit for the future by the experience I have purchased, and bid defiance to the whole sex; for if a woman be chaste, she conceives there is no occasion for the practice of any other virtue; and though

though I fully acquit the Duchess of Somerton of any misdemeanour of that description, yet I would almost have bartered the whole catalogue for a '*Grizelda*;' but my last letter has put you in possession of my melancholy ground of complaint, and nothing, Arthur, is indeed '*so tedious as the twice-told tale.*' In one word, '*incompatibility of temper*' sounded the alarm on the parchment in Doctor's Commons; and the loves and the graces, with all the hymeneal train, beat the retreat; so here I am, thank Heaven, a free agent! and am no more lectured with an enquiry, why I go to the opera, or what could induce me to resign its pleasures? and could I find a more apt simile to my present situation, I would not quote the more trite one, of the "bird and its cage."

"Your Grace is entitled to my warmest thanks, however, for having spared me the trial," retorted Craven; "had I unfortunately had a ducal coronet wherewith to decorate her brow, the fair Zantippe might

 possibly

possibly have been my own; for changed as your sentiments and feelings are, you will perhaps now forgive me the suspicion."

"Oh! most readily," returned his Grace, "though while the deception lasted, it was devilishly flattering to my vanity, to believe myself preferred to so fine a fellow as you are, Arthur."

Craven's half bow and ready smile prefaced his adding—"The man, my Lord Duke, was evidently of secondary consideration, so neither had any real cause for vanity; but, no doubt, the noble family of Lady Harriet must have felt considerable chagrin, that their fondled hope of an heir-apparent is dismissed."

"It is somewhat more than a mortification," replied the Duke, "to recollect that the uncontrouled passions of a female should extend destruction to her own embryo-offspring; but, thank Heaven! her Grace's lap-dog, and not her husband, was the offender, and the destruction of a Chinese

nese vase, annihilated the dawning hope of two families: but consign this theme to oblivion, and let me apprize you, that no other legal claimant will ever spring from me; therefore, dear Arthur, receive upon your shoulders the responsibility, for with you will rest the next pretender to our hereditary distinctions."

"I trust not," was the laconic reply; and spite of the calls of honour, imagination had taken flight to Ireland. His Grace stirred the fire, rang the bell, and looked over his cards of the preceding day; still Lord Arthur remained unconscious of all that was passing; the fascinations of Maria held their station; his *heart* was interested, and vain were the arguments of his judgment; he was at length recalled by the question—"Will you suffer me to direct your attention to our own relation? Jane Walwyn is well born, well educated, well principled, and really, I believe, well tempered: suppose you were to visit the bishop's palace, and pass the

next

next three months in analyzing the apparent virtues and perfections of the pretty daughter of our very reverend cousin?"

"Be in no haste, good Duke; I do not feel much more inclination than yourself to bow at the shrine; you rushed heedless on the tempestuous ocean, and were shipwrecked ere you lost sight of shore; I would be a more wary mariner, and try the stability of my bark, ere I launch my whole stock of happiness on the perilous voyage: but to drop metaphor, and return to plain language, I would say, that although I may hereafter seek the helpmate you recommend me to select, yet the search shall be cautious, and the election, I trust, will be more certain of favourable issue. To own the truth, however, I must confess to your Grace, that but for recent events which have occurred, my thoughts would probably never have rested on that goal; 'free and unfettered,' I would have roved my little hour, and the closing scene would probably have left me no legitimate

claims

claims of my own creation upon earth; but the pride of family intervenes between my wishes and my duties; the latter will triumph, and half a dozen jolter-headed girls and boys may in due time branch from our genealogical tree. My health, at this moment, has a little suffered from my Hibernian excursion; and I am even now on the wing for a neighbouring county, where a retired *petite chaumière* will receive me for the next three months at least, and my valet and baggage probably rested there last night; I am expected to a late dinner, and possibly your Grace will favour me with your company, to inspect my new purchase."

The proposal was negatived by the Duke, on the plea of indispensable engagements in town; and the never very assimilated brothers parted without reluctance. A solitary traveller, in that fleeting chaise which was conveying him to a retired scene, more congenial with the present gloom of his mind, the impetu-

ous

ous passions of Craven again burst forth, and warred with the nobler feelings of the friend; he groaned for the misery of Stavenant, should he discover the alienation of the affections of his adored Maria! he shuddered at the fallacious temperament of the connubial paradise, and all its attractions faded in the conviction of its instability; yet vanity, a vanity perhaps natural to a favoured lover, made Arthur believe in the excellence of his mistress, and that strong individual attachment for himself could alone have broken down the barrier of female propriety; he imagined her virtue would only have fallen a sacrifice to the resistless impulse of a love, to which she conceived *fatality* attached—credulous Craven!

Had he thought less highly of Maria, he had offered no oblation in the renunciation; it was not merely a personal inclination, that the seductive sorceress had excited; her refined blandishment had created a passion strong and fervent, one that

Cupid

Cupid would have acknowledged as the most powerful of his achievements.

Arthur was the creature of self-infatuation, and while he sacrificed his own supposed empire over the heart of the woman he idolized, to the honour of his friend, he yet sighed over the necessity of the action, sighed for Stavenant and himself.

To this melancholy dejection a wild enthusiasm succeeded, which was perfectly accordant with his character; the warm imagery of his lofty mind painted in the heroic this first conflict he had ever effected over his passions. In the sacrifice of love to friendship, there was something worthy of that soul he had been taught from cradled existence, to consider impregnate with superior excellence.

Wrapt in this conviction, Arthur sought not to subdue his ill-starred sentiments, for in the evanescence of that attachment, he conceived the merit of his conduct would fade; but now the proud triumph of rectitude, in absenting himself from this

adored object, mingled with the sighs of love.

Like a second Petrarch, in solitude he mourned his fate; but no cruel Laura was the subject of his amorous ditty; alas! his fair idol presented no reluctant charms; he himself had fled from that happiness open to his possession: yet still Maria, decked in the attractive drapery of love, appeared to his perverted optics, but the more seductive, when she would have sacrificed all to him, for Craven gloried in his own supposed dominion; it gratified his vanity; it coalesced with the warmth of his own impetuosity; but he was neither formed for solitude nor despair; and while he had temporarily indulged in both, the gay and dissipated world, where so late this young noble had shone an object of the first importance, now, with its usual inconstancy, ceased to cast a thought on their former favourite.

His first emigration from the theatre of public life afforded a topic for astonish-

ment

ment and wonder; but it resounded on the passing breath of general discussion, and soon was lost in exhausted conjecture; another Adonis started into female favour; eloquence proceeded from the lips of another parliamentary hero; and the late renowned branch of Somerton was soon disregarded, if not forgotten. His name no longer filled the columns of the morning papers; the Serpentine was equally thronged, as when admiring crowds, led by fashion's magic law, gazed on the fine Herculean form of the libertine youth, as, in full consciousness of his own attractions, he traced the graceful curves along the icey covert, more conspicuous at this moment from his vices than his virtues, more applauded for his frivolities than his talents; although he, Lord Craven, possessed both virtues and talents, to have constituted him, by a right application, all that was good and great.

At this moment, Spanish heroism first blinded, with its apparent dazzling force,

the

the eyes of England's statesmen, and fired the British bosom with correspondent ardour; among the rest, a Craven roused from torpid inaction. We will not venture to profess that a thirst of fame, a passion for popularity, did not entwine with the more noble stimulus which prompted this Albion youth to volunteer on an expedition, commenced under the warmest auspices; but certain it is, heroism the most intrepid marked the career of Craven; and never did fame more justly drop the full-blossoming laurels, than when they rested on the head of the now presumptive heir of Somerton; but individual valour, alas! could but little avail in the general cause, and with the remnant of our successless party, he again reached the English shore. That a youth, habituated to luxurious ease, and enjoying all the indolent enervations of wealth, should suddenly rouse to the desire of braving a campaign, at once pregnant with peril, hardship, and death, was no very frequent occurrence in the

archives

archives of our dissipated Bond-street loungers, and St. James's heroes; and from its being no common instance, it became appreciated far beyond its real merit.

Craven therefore once more swayed the imperial diadem of fashion; and the idol of even a nation's admiration, his triumph was supreme.

In fact, at this era of his life, Lord Arthur in reality presented an animated portrait of superior colouring; an individual exalted attachment for the Maria of fancied excellence, had chastened the wayward inclinations of his heart, and the libertinism of his early arrogant youth was annihilated by the influence of virtuous love; for the indulgence of a criminal passion for the wife of his friend, was incompatible with that soul of honour which glowed with almost unequalled ardour in the breast of the energetic Craven; and he would have deemed it sacrilege, unheard of profanity, unparalleled to the ardent nature of friendship, to have sought to draw

draw the affections of Maria to himself! but these love had voluntarily surrendered, and Arthur was but man, notwithstanding the boasted self-confidence in his own powers; and within his breast he fondly cherished the fatal declaration, while in secret he treasured the remembrance of her love.

A puerile ambition marred for a season the public lustre of our hero's character; at the epoch when it shone most resplendent, an unfortunate attachment had communicated restless anguish to his heart, and he sought to bury it in the gratification of that contemptible vanity of fashionable distinction, which was a prominent feature of his character; he determined to model for himself a new species of eccentricity, which would be calculated to attract attention, in the present era of absurdity and folly.

In wayward fancy, he assumed a hitherto untrodden character, in the chapter of common life; with an aim at eccentricity, he yet assumed no one peculiar singularity,

rity, but by an union of contradiction, formed a *melange* of oddity.

A Proteus in very truth, his decided feature was vanity; like an actor, he played many parts, from the higher walks of polished elegance, to the comic key of absurdity; and often descending to the vagaries of farcical delusion, one moment the moralist, as suddenly the trifler; one moment the flowery sophist, the next the cynic; one moment descending to the slang of the turf hero, the pugilist, or the *four-in-hand-club*, the next the polished Grandison of a former age; one moment the ardent enthusiastic admirer of female beauty, the attentive man of gallantry, the next, a very modern coxcomb in indifference, indolence, and apathy, seated on his own imaginary throne of power, and claiming the feminine world to bow and adore, with an insolence of pretension to which the fashionable fair habitually yielded, nor sought to repress.

Yet amid all this mass of whimsicality, this

this affected concentration of eccentricity, the ray of genius, which at times penetrated the dark cloud of frivolity and error, still marked the Craven of nature's prolific bounty.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Who trust alone in beauty's feeble ray,
Boast but the worth Bussora's pearls display;
Drawn from the deep we own their surface bright,
But dark within, they drink no lust'rous light;
Such are the maids, and such the charms they boast,
By sense unaided, or to virtue lost.

COLLINS.

The eloquent Petitioner.

At breakfast, Zitella playfully arraigned Mrs. Nugent, for not having ever made mention of the eastern hero, her recent *compagnon de voyage,* whose fame had been so lavishly extolled at the coterie of Lady Darnford the preceding day, while with a smile she added—" And I understand even

these plaudits, extravagant as they certainly were, presented but a faint echo of the Bath world, his scene of life for the last few weeks."

"I hope you are not alluding to that pattern of perfection," interrupted Nugent pettishly, "the mighty Mr. Molesworth? I am weary of his boasted excellence, his prudent virtues, his manifold recommendations."

"Now, indeed," said Fanny, "I cannot see why you always hate to hear anybody say a good word of that dear sweet young man."

"I wish, Mrs. Nugent, you would learn to speak with greater propriety," exclaimed the former petulantly, "and recollect your relative situations."

"Now that is only because you cannot bear to hear him praised by me, that you choose to be in a foolish jealous taking; but I never was ungrateful in my born-days, and I am sure he saved *Bagtel's* life, when the sailor was going to throw him

overboard,

overboard, because he bit him, and it was a very good-natured action, although done to a dog; and then he was so kind to the sick man on board the ship, and gave him up his birth in his state-room, because it was more comfortable, and went himself into a little bit of a hole, enough to stew him alive, as all the others were chock full, and all out of compassion and christian charity; and I do say, he is a very kind-hearted good soul as ever breathed the breath of life."

"You are perfectly welcome, Madam, perfectly at liberty to admire him," retorted Nugent with a bitter smile, "only do not oblige me to come forth in support of your assertions of the manifold estimables of this favourite of the fair."

"Laws, Bob, don't be so snappish; I was only telling our niece the truth, and I think they would make a good comely match, and set their horses very well together; and there's money enough, you

know, on her side, to do for both, if so be that he should have none."

"Lady Zitella Herbert," rejoined Nugent, proudly, "is too sensible of her own dignity, I should hope, to condescend to think of one in fortune and family so much her inferior; although," he added, turning more immediately towards his young ward, "it would have reflected greater credit on your Ladyship, had you exhibited more proper inherent pride, than to have repeated the idle panegyric, or have felt less curiosity to hear further, of this undistinguished commoner. I grieve to perceive the necessity of extending some censure to this humiliation, and that it may be advisable to remind your Ladyship, family claims should not be overlooked in a matrimonial election."

"I thank you, my dear Sir," replied Zitella, "and cannot fail to profit by the convincing lesson you have yourself afforded me on this head."

A moment

A moment sufficed to give rise to regret for the quick retort she had uttered; it had been impulsive, and its reflection pained her, since she was conscious of no right to censure the actions of a senior relative, who had professed and evinced for her both kindness and affection; and taking his hand, as the frown gathered on his brow, she subjoined, with respectful deference—" I trust, my dear uncle, that you will never behold your ward the dupe of any matrimonial mercenary, who, poor in purse, as in soul, may cover the future domestic miseries of the all-attractive *Heiress* with the flimsy air-spun artificial veil of love, summoned to aid convenient purpose; and that in the important election of a partner for life, I shall receive the full approbation of that relative, to whose protection maternal judgment has consigned me."

The eyes of Nugent glanced around the room, and finding his wife had entered an

an adjacent one, he pressed the hand of our heroine with kindness, as in a softened tone he rejoined—"Your retort at the moment angered, and its reflection now wounds me; yet I admit, in some measure, the just insinuation. A *practical* lesson destroys the effect of *theoretical* argument, founded on contradictory basis; yet the victim of rashness, and mad impetuosity of feeling, may from experience *warn*. I have been, I am still, the slave to beauty! the passions of men bend not with pliant delicacy to the subjugation of propriety; the customs of society extend not to our sex that curb of inclination, which women voluntarily receive and submit to. Zitella, you witness me the husband of beauty's self, loving with all the fire of my ardent nature, and beloved with all the grateful tenderness of a bosom unspotted by vice! yet, oh God! you know not what this proud heart suffers. Sophia, hateful, detested Sophia, could you analyse its feelings,

ings, even you would allow the torture they sustain, ample as your revengeful soul could wish!"

"Most certainly," resumed our orphan, "do I feel for, and pity your matrimonial causes for disquiet."

"Pity!" re-echoed Nugent, dropping the hand he had till then retained.

"Do you purpose to add further to my accumulation of suffering, by informing me I am sunk into becoming an object of *pity?* no, Lady Zitella, however I may internally lament the unpolished manners, and the uninstructed mind of the beauteous Fanny, yet in the acceptation of worldly custom, I elevate the object I deigned to select as the partner of my wedded days to my standard in society, and as Mrs. Nugent, stamped her claims upon public respect. Did your Ladyship indeed make a similarly unequal connexion, the effect would be widely different, and a husband's plebeian name annihilate for

 ever

ever the long-established appellation of your natal ancestry."

The impetuous air of pique in which this observation was delivered, at once convinced his auditor that the matrimonial subject was one on which his feelings were too irritable to endure the slightest allusion, in regard to a sense of his erring election, however delicately couched, although it had been broached by himself: the return of Mrs. Nugent, however, precluded the necessity of reply, and her young guest almost immediately retired from the breakfast-room.

As she reascended the stairs leading to her own apartments, one of the domestics delivered a letter, which had been just left by an unknown messenger for her Ladyship; and having broken the seal, the contents met her eyes, as follows.

"The signature is unknown to you; yet the wretched being who

who addresses you, would be happy if he could lay claim to the same privilege; alas, no! for he is compelled to present himself before you, as the unworthy object of your late clemency; the—how can I bear to repeat the degrading confession? the man who last night attempted to purloin your purse, your watch! *You* arrested the arm of justice, and *you* have restored him to the paths of rectitude; it was his first deviation from the road, and you have the ability to save him from impending destruction; '*he is no common robber; oh, do not detain him; his life may pay the forfeit; I am rich, and he wants; suffer him to keep the purse.*' The appeal to humanity was only in part complied with; the dearly-purchased gold was wrested from my grasp, and I reached home only to witness the encreased miseries of my wife, my children! I dare not delineate the scene which followed; my brain would madden at the recollection; the expedient however pressed on me—'*I am rich!*' if

 so,

so, you can yet save me. Born and educated as a gentleman, I have, by a strange reverse of fortune, by unexpected adversity, been reduced to the extreme of penury; want, under every horrid form, assailed our peaceful dwelling; those objects, nearest to my heart, I saw not only deprived of all accustomed comforts, but reduced, by the cravings of unappeased nature, to the verge of that grave I had almost determined should close in another day upon our united miseries!

"This confession, Madam, will in some measure pourtray my state of mind, when I snatched my single shilling from the hand of my wife, to procure *the means!* I was stopped in my progress, by a crowd of carriages, before the door of the Opera-house; I mingled with the groupe; I saw hundreds received into the coffers of its treasurer; I reflected upon my own hapless case; and if I became desperate, your heart will plead some extenuation for the effect; the rest you too well know! Pride,

stubborn

stubborn unbending pride, intervenes betwixt me and menial occupations; but a vista now opens on my view, which leads to competence, if I had the means of securing its attainment; but, alas! three hundred pounds is absolutely necessary, and without that sum, I dare not attempt its attainment; frugality and time would enable me to repay the pecuniary part of the debt in as many years; but destitute of friends, where can I, a hapless stranger, look? Dare I raise my hopes to your Ladyship, and still further, may I venture to implore your total silence upon the subject? that you institute no enquiry whatever, as to my title to your benevolence; for without the latter, I bar myself from accepting the former. I can offer no apology for the bold request, or the intrusion on your time, for if my situation plead not for me, I have no other claim.

"With a high sense of your unexampled generosity, and fervent hope of the ex-

tension of your benevolence, I remain,

"Honoured Madam,

"Your Ladyship's

"Most devoted servant,

"GEORGE MILFORD."

Zitella read the above with mixed sensations; she deeply entered into the miseries of the unhappy Milford and his family; but felt gratified that the ability was yet left her to relieve them. Three hundred pounds was certainly a considerable sum to bestow at once on charity, yet less would not complete the benevolent purpose; and she was reluctant to detract from the eventual good that promised to arise to an unfortunate family, from the extension of the nominated sum.

Not long was spent in reflection; the impulse of strong and acute feelings decided in favour of the donation; and without further hesitation, she wrote, in favour of her petitioner, a check on the banker

who

who was appointed by Lord Edgeworth to honour her drafts; and placing it within an enclosure, directed to Mr. Milford, at the street specified in his letter as his present residence, she dispatched it by her own faithful female attendant, on whose secrecy she could rely.

Scarcely was this embassy arranged, when the Abigail of Mrs. Nugent announced her approach; Zitella desired her to enter, when with a suppressed simper, and a respectful courtsey, she delivered the information that Sir Edward Horton was below; and her mistress had sent to request her Ladyship's presence, as the Baronet was so anxious to see her, that he would gnaw off all his new gloves, if she did not make haste to come down, as he was quite fidgety at her absence; while, with a lower obeisance, the assiduous speaker added, "that she hoped her Ladyship would excuse what she had repeated, but she had received a particular injunction from her mistress not to miss one single

word

word of her message, and she had endeavoured to obey her."

However annoyed, our orphan could not restrain a smile at the ludicrous message thus conveyed through a domestic; yet with pain she traced in it a further proof of that ignorance of delicate propriety, which was ever conspicuous in the language and manner of the beautiful wife of her uncle.

When Horton was absent, his remembrance was coupled with the varied strictures in the nameless "Dependant" and the titled "Heiress." Repugnance mingled with disgust in this connexion of memory; but at the moment of listening to this flow of really elegant language, clothing sentiments the most refined, and yielding the *agremens* of genuine vivacity to diurnal anecdote, she insensibly lost the painful recollection, and could not withhold an involuntary tribute of admiration, to talents brilliant by nature, and informed by judicious culture.

Scarcely

Scarcely had our heroine been seated in the drawing-room, before Mrs. Nugent informed her she had just been expressing a wish to see the Tower, and that Sir Edward had offered his services to escort them both, as she hoped for her company in the excursion.

An assent was tendered, with not much inward grace, we must acknowledge, after finding all attempt vain to persuade the curious fair to postpone the visit until some other day; in fact, Zitella saw the propriety of offering some sacrifice of inclination to the entreaties of the wife of her uncle, and the mistress of that mansion in which she was a permanent guest. Just, however, as they had arisen to descend to the carriage of Mrs. Nugent, which was in waiting for a morning drive, their exit was impeded by a servant announcing Mrs. and the Misses Harley, who entered, accompanied by Mr. Neville.

"I fear we detain you," said the former, "and that our visit is inopportune, since you

you appeared on the eve of quitting home, when we made our entré."

"Why now," replied Mrs. Nugent, "for my part, I like every thing that is fair and above-board, and so I see no use to mince the matter, for I was going with my niece and this kind gentleman, just to see the beasts in the great tower, that was built purposely to hold all the wild creatures that come from outlandish parts, that's the truth of it."

"It must be a spacious edifice, indeed!" said Neville, in a low voice, and a smile correspondent to his manner, as he addressed Miss Harley, "to contain *all the wild creatures* that emigrate around the world."

"And so," continued Mrs. Nugent, "I do not see why we can't all go together, instead of chattering a bit here, instead of there."

"I approve the plan greatly," exclaimed Miss Harley.

"Heavens!" breathed the impertinent Arabella,

Arabella, who, wrapt up in the consequence of city wealth, often infringed the limits of good-breeding, " Heavens! I would not visit such a shocking low place for the universe."

" La, me, I never heard it was low in my born days!" said Fanny; " but I dares to say, it is high enough for us all to get in, without being squashed; don't you think so, Mr. Neville?"

" Yes, quite high enough for your altitude certainly," was the impertinent reply, with an equivoque he was well convinced would never be developed by the ignorant fair.

Miss Harley, who, according to her own phraseology, thought it a monstrous good quiz to be of the vulgar party, that she might afterwards display her own vivacity in a description of the frolic, now repeated her wish to accompany the trio, and Mr. Neville also joined in a similar request; but as Mrs. Harley and her junior daughter felt perfect disinclination for the proposed

posed party, their carriage was destined for a contrary direction, while the chariot of Mrs. Nugent being at the door, there was some difficulty as to the arrangement of the separate individuals.

"My curricle," said the Baronet, on perceiving the demur, "is at the door—if Lady Zitella Herbert will honour me by occupying a seat therein?"

Our heroine, who felt particularly averse to this arrangement, having no desire to render herself strangely conspicuous, by traversing the populous streets of the city, in a vehicle so ill appropriated, in her opinion, for the purpose, and also affording this public encouragement of the very assiduous attentions of the Baronet, was on the point of civilly declining the proposal, when she was interrupted and overpowered by the loud voice of Mrs. Nugent, who exclaimed, as she clapped his shoulder as an encouraging reward for the accommodation of the thought,

"You have hit it to a nicety; aye, that is

is a good plan indeed! and will answer much better than we three women going together, for then Miss Harley and I will contrive to make room for Mr. Neville; for though Hubby has had the chariot made after the newest fashion, which is, it seems, to squeeze people together in a sociable way, and keep them tight and close, that they may not take cold, and three people can't sit well without tidy packing, scant as the fine ladies are now-a-days of petticoats; however, I dares to say Miss Harley won't mind a little scrowghing to make room for her lover; for I have heard all about it," she added, winking her eye significantly at the tittering Arabella.

"I am infinitely indebted to your kind proposal," said Neville, "but I will not trespass so largely on your convenience; if you will, however, allow me to ascend the barouche seat, I will have the honour of driving you."

"Lauk-a-daisy," returned the vulgar incorrigible, "I would not think of such a thing, on no account whatever; bless my stars,

stars, I could never sit quietly withinside of the coach, and let a lord's cousin be driving on the dickey; not but what for all that," and she absolutely made him a low courtsey, "I am vastly grateful to you for your polite offer, and the great honour you did me to propose such a thing. Gemini stars! if any one had told me, aye, even the old conjuring woman Deb Perkins, when I was in Farmer Dobbins's pig-yard, that I should ever have a lord's cousin offer to be my coachman, I am sure I would have thought them the veriest liars that black father Long-legs ever produced!"

The haughty blood of Nugent, impregnant with the noble stream of Herbert, filled each vein almost to bursting, and nearly suffocated the proud Zitella; and we must confess she was sufficiently uncharitable, most fervently to wish the beauteous Fanny had never emigrated from her employment of "tending Farmer Dobbins's pigs."

Sir Edward marked the swelling bosom

writhing

writhing beneath attempted suppression of its emotion; for the sensitive orphan was fully aware, that her distress and annoyance augmented the amusement of the malicious Harleys, and the impertinent Neville, who, satisfied with veiling ridicule from its immediate object, by an equivocal manner and expression she could not penetrate, lawlessly revelled in the entertainment they derived from her unpolished ignorance.

The countenance of Horton alone remained unmoved by a smile, if we except that of our annoyed heroine, as with urbanity the most refined, he courteously said— "We are all the votaries of fashion, my dear Mrs. Nugent, in some shape or other, however we may disclaim the distinction; true it is, that could our grandsires and their dames peep from their marble enclosures, how great would be the shock, to be presented to their descendants in some of the epitome of our day; when the sacred hoop, which forbade the approach

of a male attendant, but within most respectful boundaries, and the profound full-bottomed wig of Sir Cloudesly Shovel's day, with the gold-headed cane, and ruffles well starched, giving place to the Brutus head, groom coat, and pantaloons of the modern beaux! these retrograde movements of the fickle goddess we contemplate with a mixture of astonishment and amazement; but when she also permits us, as in the present case, to become guides and directors to the more estimable part of her creation, proudly we seize her reins, and compound to follow her the full latitude of caprice, by way of expressing our gratude; but to you, my dear Madam, the changes of her court must indeed be ludicrous; for the length of absence from your native isle has enabled us to alter the whole system of manners as well as dress."

At the commencement, the interesting speaker had taken the hand of our heroine, to lead her towards the door, the party having all risen; yet grateful for the evident

dent attention to her feelings, which had prompted the effort to draw satirical animadversion from the ignorant Fanny, to the absurdity of the charioteer mania, which has, like an epidemic disease, travelled from the nobles of our land, through the various gradations of society, the hand still retained, retreated not from the tender pressure of him who had thus spoken; her heart beat a silent acknowledgment of gratitude, and unreluctantly she suffered him to lead her towards his curricle.

It is by delicate attentions directed to the finer feelings of the amiable breast, that man subdues the female heart; signal services of active import animate the bosom to an admiring ardent gratitude; but that tender sympathy which appears to penetrate the inmost recesses of the soul, and anticipate, with happy effort, each trifling wish, or soothe each little grief, steals irresistibly to the seat, where all real misfortunes, or fancied ills, gather in painful compact, while sweetly respon-

sive to its softened tenderness, the correspondent note vibrates on the chord of love!

Now, whether the Baronet acknowledged the truth of this reflection or not, he certainly did contrive to render himself far more agreeable to Zitella, during the curricle *tête-à-tête,* than he had ever before done; and had the luckless memorable conversation, between himself and Mrs. Nugent, never have been overheard, he would certainly have ranked as a distinguished favourite in her estimation.

On passing through a narrow lane of the environs of the city, the curricle was forced to draw up close to the pavement, to afford room for a landau to pass, on the barouche seat of which, a very interesting countenance and elegant figure attracted a passing survey; but while the eyes of our heroine were momentarily raised to the object of regard, a distant bow of recognition was mutually tendered between Sir Edward and himself; and the sweet smile

smile of Mrs. Ancaster, gracefully kissing her hand from within the carriage, in memory of former acquaintance, arrested the attention of Zitella, who, having courteously returned the salutation, each was soon lost to the sight of the other.

"That fascinating female is known to you, I perceive," said Horton.

"Yes," replied the former, "she received a passport to my particular acquaintance, through some esteemed and valued friends, to whom she bears family connexion; but I know not the gentleman on the barouche seat; the bows from him were therefore, I imagine, to yourself, and you consequently can inform me if he bears any relationship to the Ancasters?"

"No *professed* one," returned the Baronet, with a half smile; "his name is Molesworth; and I understand he ostensibly brought letters of introduction and particular recommendation from a friend of the Dean at Bengal, in which province this young man has for many years past resided.

sided. The scandalous world, however, afford him a *right* to the attention of the divine, even as bearing a *natural* claim to paternal solicitude: be it, however, as it may, Mr. Clarence Molesworth seems quite domesticated, and Mrs. Ancaster appears willing to sanction the friendly kindness of her husband to this nominal stranger; since she therefore proves gracious, no other person is licensed to condemn the zealous endeavours of the Dean, to promote the welfare of a favourite youth; indeed, I think he is very likely to carve his own fortune, with great dexterity and *eclat*, for the smiles of the fair appear to promise him success in a matrimonial adventure, should he incline to sacrifice the principles of the heart to monied speculation in hymeneal traffic. He was quite the nonpareil of the Bath rooms, where we were by chance presented to each other a few weeks since: a young man of elegant person, and imposing address, may readily, in the present easy state of society, if he have but

but one friendly introducer to sanction his first outset in life, worm his way into the higher circles, by preserving suitable appearance, and the Ancaster family is very advantageous patronage."

At this epoch of conversation the Tower became in sight, and directed attention to the immediate object of their little journey. The party alighted from their respective carriages on reaching the spot, and proceeded through the usual routine of this celebrated relic of ancient architecture, until they had at last reached the small armoury.

"Well!" exclaimed Mrs. Nugent to her guide, who, with indefatigable industry, had answered all her queries, and given the information it had been deemed necessary he should acquire for the situation held, "this is the exact likeness of the Witch of Endor, you say? I never saw a witch before, and if this be like one, I hope I never shall see another."

Zitella, distressed at finding the wife of

 her

her uncle, even to so ignorant and illiterate a creature as the one before them, a subject of amusement, which the suppressed smile and air of consequence assumed, as the offered explanation implied, walked to some little distance from the party, and employed herself in examining a small helmet, which appeared of modern structure, and of curious workmanship, but as if placed there by accident, as it bore no analogy to the other decorations of the room. Two other individuals had in the interim entered, but absorbed in that which had excited her attention, from its singular mechanism, she had not observed the addition, until the sudden movement of an object above her head attracted her sight, at the moment she beheld a tremendous piece of iron-work falling on her! terror forced an involuntary shriek, as a gentleman darted forward, and saved her at the expence of a violent blow upon his own arm; the bone did not appear broken; but the pale face of the stranger evidenced considerable

considerable pain; the party, alarmed by the noise, crowded around them, and it was discovered that the accident had been occasioned by the carelessness of the person employed in repairing that part of the building; but ere the coat could be removed, the arm bore alarming appearance of having swoln to a considerable size.

The stranger was rather interesting than handsome; while an air of fashion and elegance pervaded his manner and address, under all the disadvantages of circumstance. He was accompanied by a little boy, who, much alarmed, cried incessantly for "dear uncle Gerald."

Mr. Nugent's carriage remained at the gate, and it was immediately ordered to convey him home, for Zitella felt much disturbed at the circumstance, the accident having been incurred by a successful attempt to save her from serious injury.

Neville assisted the disabled man into the carriage, and the child being also placed there, he followed himself, from the

desire of being further serviceable, promising to rejoin the ladies as soon as he had discharged his self-imposed duty.

While Mrs. Nugent amused herself with saying—"How funny it would be to have all the party stuffed into a number coach, and jumbled home together, as they could not now well divide, and more particularly as they had but one gentleman left; but no matter," she continued, "*What is one man's meat is another man's poison;*' for if the poor battered arm of the stranger had not induced us to put him into my carriage, this hack would not have been employed, so 'it is an ill wind blows nobody good;' and who knows, Zitella, but you, or Miss Harley, may have made a conquest of this young person, and he might be a lord, or a duke, or an ambassador, for what we know, for the guide told me this was the place where all the kings, and princes, and great folks, were imprisoned, which, to be sure, I think is a cruel disgrace to house them with all the

brute

brute animals, for the keeper says it is all one Tower."

"Man, my dear Madam, is at best a brute, when savage warfare stimulates his revengeance against a humiliated foe," returned Sir Edward; "but I fear, in the present case, the ladies would rather shrink from the resurrection of love, although in a sceptered apparition; but," added he smiling, "it may be brought to the test—which plan shall we in serious truth adopt, to procure a conveyance home? the most expeditious will be to send to an inn for a carriage."

"Oh no! I can't wait," impatiently cried Mrs. Nugent, "for I am quite pinched with cold already; therefore, pray, Mr. Tower-keeper, have a coach called from that stand just by, and so let us whisk down, and wait at the door in readiness, that we may pop in, and not keep it waiting."

Our mortified heroine felt relieved by the proposed exit, and in her anxiety to

 get

get home, scarcely cared how so desirable an end were effected; and therefore, without further hesitation, obeyed the signal for a removal. The party ascended the hackney-coach, which, in slow and solemn state, at length set them down from whence they had sallied, while the servant of the Baronet followed in the curricle.

CHAP.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAP. VII.

"Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace,
That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish,
Beyond comparison, the worst are those
That to our folly, or our guilt, we owe."

The Card-Table.

UPON returning home, Zitella found on her dressing-table a letter, which the subscription acknowledged to be from the pen of Mrs. Mulgrave; it was at once replete with expressions of continued regard for her young friend, and delicately tendered advice in respect to her conduct to the ill-assorted partner of her guardian. Having expatiated on matters of more im-

mediate importance, the following paragraph was subjoined.

"I have once, since your departure, seen my relative connexions, the Ancasters, although only *en passant*, as they were proceeding across the country to London; they were accompanied by a gentleman, who presented to me a letter, of very particular introduction, from a valued friend in Bengal, whose high panegyric of the bearer of this epistle would have stamped with me his claims to excellence, without even an opportunity of personally judging of his worth; for well I know, my good friend Fullerton is a man who forms not hasty conclusions, nor is easily deceived in his estimate of the human character; therefore, when I perused the glowing portrait of this heart of virtue beaming in the countenance of this elegant and polished youth, that of Lady Zitella Herbert seemed to me alone deserving to form its companion! I am not in general inclined to indulge the visions of fanciful speculation, and

and yet I could not forbear dwelling on the probable happiness that would result from an union of such mental excellence, should reciprocal love ever link these congenial hearts: but in expatiating on this dream of pleasurable anticipation, I really believe I have forgotten to nominate the real hero of my lucubration; and in the world of London, the estimable is too often overshadowed by the dazzling and meretricious throng of the less deserving; therefore my boasted miracle of perfection might mingle in the herd undiscovered, did not the name of *Clarence Molesworth* direct your search; Colonel Fullerton has represented him to me as a young man of respectable connexions, but neither allied to rank or wealth; his income is moderate, but sufficient to maintain him with circumspection in those higher walks of society, for which his manners and mental acquirements render him adequate to shine a distinguished member. My friend also writes, that he has received a liberal edu-

cation, although chiefly from private instruction; that he has for many years resided in Bengal, in a civil situation of little emolument, but great respectability.

"Such is a brief sketch of the little history of this individual, who appears so preeminently elevated in the opinion of Colonel Fullerton, a man whose friendship and favourable estimation reflect honour on those to whom it may affix. Shall I confess to your Ladyship my further folly, and how far the airy flight of imagination operated? yes, notwithstanding the impression you may very naturally form, of your aged friend being descended into second childhood, of which this appears to afford some ground of belief, you will imagine, yet I must indulge the communicative propensity, I believe invariably attached to age, and reveal my own little scheme, which was not to make mention of yourself in any respect before this redoubtable youth: for when I, with gratified approbation, heard him express contempt and disgust for the

gawdy

gawdy butterflies of Bath, hovering over the gay parterre of pleasure, and tasting, with avidity, all the palling sweets of dissipation, heedless of aught *essential*, living but the little hour of folly and absurdity, inane in their conversation, frivolous in their manners and pursuits, and retaining all the prejudices of fashion's potent laws, I anticipated with delight the contrast my favourite Zitella would afford to these soulless females; and that the attraction might prove the more powerful, from being unprepared for the happy assemblage, in one individual of virtue, intellect, and beauty: yes, my beloved girl, you are calculated to shine in domestic life; and if the character of your future partner be but as estimable and engaging as that of Clarence Molesworth, you must be happy; for I trust the heart and hand will never be disunited in the marriage gift."

The orphan raised her eyes as she concluded the last sentence; they fell upon the reflection of her own animated counte-

nance

nance in a toilette mirror; never had she viewed her own beauty with an expression so complacently happy; the mind of man is often swayed by first impressions, and Zitella felt anxious to be approved by an individual, who ranked so high in estimation of those whose opinions she valued; the wish was transient; for when she reflected on the brilliant personal charms of the uncultured Fanny, who attracted the gaze of every eye, she viewed the perfection of beauty in an inferior light than she had ever yet done; for she felt that her heart required an attachment more noble, more exalted, than the mere personal attachment the lovely Nugent had alone awakened in her domestic partner.

The evening was destined to be spent at Mrs. Harley's, whither the company of hundreds had been solicited, by cards issued many weeks preceding; it was the first time that Zitella had ever accompanied Mrs. Nugent to any party abroad, and she looked forward to her conspicuous

entrée,

entrée, with this ill-assimilated protectress, in painful anticipation of further mortification; for the beauty of her companion was too refulgent to hope she would pass unnoticed.

Upon the delivery of their names, they were of course announced as "Lady Zitella Herbert and Mrs. Nugent."

"Only think of the stupid servant," exclaimed the latter, "giving in the *spinster* before the *married woman!*"

Our heroine smiled at the ignorance of etiquette which marked the observation, but felt somewhat shocked for the opinion of others, when the poor untutored Fanny, regardless of the laws of society, preceded her into the room.

The circumstance in itself was a matter of no moment to the superior mind of our heroine; but the *trait* of vulgarity it evinced, pained her in the wife of her uncle, as it gave an unequivocal proof of her not having been accustomed to move in her present sphere.

Mrs.

Mrs. Nugent's attention soon became engrossed by several gentlemen; for the male sex are ever prompt to offer attention and admiration to personal loveliness, and the ungarnished mind is but too often sanctioned by them, if clad in beauty's mantle.

Zitella rejoiced at the circumstance, as she was now authorized to quit her side, and willingly embraced the opportunity of advancing towards the Countess of Darnford, whom she perceived sitting at some little distance, conversing with Lady Edgeworth.

"Is your connexion present?" enquired the former, after the first recognition had been mutually exchanged.

Zitella replied affirmatively.

"We have passed visits," rejoined the Countess, "but have been so very unfortunate as not to have been personally made known."

"Mrs. Nugent will, I am sure, be happy to be presented to your Ladyship," returned

turned the former, "and I will, if you desire it, perform the ceremony."

"Upon no account," replied the Countess; "I have a propensity to discover people from *description,* a kind of prescience which I like to indulge; and I presume on this talent sufficiently to imagine I shall be enabled, without nominal information, to distinguish the election of my old friend the *judgmatic* Robert; but *apropos,* now we are on this subject—" she arose, and taking the arm of Zitella, drew her to a little distance from where she had been sitting, and then continued, "have you any objection to transfer the presenting ceremony to me, and become known to Lady Edgeworth? I am not aware how you may be situated in regard to your guardian, otherwise I should not conceive it a matter for query, since although a separated wife, the reputation of her Ladyship is spotless, and she is in every respect a highly-estimated member of society."

"As my guardian has never interdicted the

the communication," returned our orphan, "I conceive myself perfectly at liberty to accept your kind proposal."

"I am happy to find that the case," resumed the former, "as Lady Edgeworth has expressed a wish for the acquaintance; the present is a favourable opportunity, and therefore, with your permission, I will embrace it."

Her young companion assented; and this form of etiquette was soon accomplished. Had the person of the fair Eastern first called forth the eulogium of Zitella, her manner, so bewitchingly conciliating, so magically fascinating, converted it into enthusiasm; but it was the enthusiasm of respectful admiration, for benignity and majesty were so peculiarly blended in this singular woman, that while the one invited approach, the other repelled familiarity.

"Will you accept the office of guardian to my seat, Lady Zitella," said the Countess; "I am inclined for an elopement of

of ten minutes; for in such a crowd, I may not, on my return, be so fortunate as to find mine unoccupied; and I am now so much accustomed to indulgence, that even to a senior, or a languid belle wishing to exhibit the interesting caricature of delicacy, I should feel a disinclination to resign the comfort of a chair."

Our heroine accepted the charge, and promised, with playful badinage, to protect her ward from innovation, while, with infinite pleasure, she embraced the *tête-à-tête* seat next Lady Edgeworth, who immediately turning towards her, said—" A London assembly, I am taught to believe, is somewhat a novelty to your Ladyship; you have been rather more at large in the enjoyment of rural scenery and unsophisticated nature, for you are immediately, I presume, from Dorsetshire, and have visited no other part of England?"

"Not last from that county," replied Zitella; but the same instant recollecting where she had stopped, she hesitated, blushed, and

and stammeringly added—"for I spent two days in—Wiltshire."

"Wiltshire!" she replied with quickness, "then doubtless on a visit to your guardian, and you have seen my child—?"

"Yes, Madam; we have recently passed many hours together, and she blooms in perfect health, a little wood-nymph."

"Pardon, Lady Zitella, a mother's solicitude; my heart dictates a thousand and a thousand questions concerning my beloved girl; describe her to me; let me, at least in imagination, once more behold my cherished idol," and every nerve of the fair speaker became agitated, every sense absorbed in attention.

Our heroine sympathized in the acute feelings of the interesting parent; she pourtrayed, as correctly as memory permitted, the present appearance of the young recluse; while the beautiful eyes of the Eastern glistened with delight, as she listened with almost breathless attention.

A very evident attempt to subdue agitation

tation was however visible, as in a voice rendered firm by effort, she enquired if any paternal likeness was still distinguishable?

"A very strong one," she returned; "but the outline of the original is feminized, and the softened features of expression are blended with an almost infantine playfulness, that is wonderfully pleasing."

"Did she speak of her mother?" returned the anxious querist, "or perhaps—" she hesitated and paused, as if the intended sentence was inadvertent, and reflection barred its conclusion.

"It is with pleasure," answered the former, "I can assure your Ladyship, her mother lives in tender recollection; she thinks and speaks of her with an enthusiasm which must be truly grateful to your feelings; and if I may judge of the future by the present, I am satisfied neither time nor circumstance will efface the affectionate attachment."

The bosom of Lady Edgeworth dilated,

as with unexpected gratification, while energetically she pronounced—" Alas, my poor child! she at least regards me, and in her love I yet am rich——" she reclined back in the chair, and her late acute feelings seemed lost in mellowed recollections, as Craven approached, and seating himself on a muffet at the feet of our heroine, repeated—" You behold me here to be amused!"

The spirits of Zitella were agitated, but she felt the necessity of exertion, more particularly as the abstraction into which Lady Edgeworth had fallen, required her aid to divert observation; rallying therefore, she returned—" The spectator who expects amusement generally considers himself obligated to offer some remuneration; in what way, then, my Lord, are we to look for yours, if we succeed in the attempt to which you summon our powers?"

" Your sex, my Lady, are such adepts in the amusing art, that ours have latterly

quite resigned the employment into their hands."

"Pray then, on your part adopt some other, for to resign employment altogether would be dangerous; you would become mischievous as monkeys, and give us an infinity of trouble, instead of being, as I am inclined sometimes to believe you, "*children of a larger growth.*"

"Then you must in pity dispense the leading-strings to the poor bantlings; begin then with me; you cannot think what a docile pupil I should make, either as your fan-bearer, your billet-doux scribbler, or your little wing-footed page."

"No, a more useful task awaits you; if you afford me in reality the dominion you profess, I echo your own original words, 'Amuse me,' for I am indolently inclined."

"With '*a sonnet to your eyebrow,*' fair Lady; a conundrum to puzzle; a description of a new dress to interest; an anecdotical duel to alarm; a Paget romance to fascinate;

fascinate; or Italian love-notes to subdue? I am quite accommodating, as willing to sport one as the other."

"And equally *au fait* at all," archly articulated his auditor.

"I fear," said Miss Harley, who at this moment advanced, and laid her gloveless white hand on the shoulder of Craven, as he sat on the muffet, "I fear, my Lord, even if I could usurp the office of Mercury, and become a messenger of the gods, I should be at this moment an unwelcome intruder; but in defiance of apprehension, I am commanded to summon your attendance at the card-table; the board of green cloth at this moment waits your presence."

"But what nymph presides there?" enquired Craven; "if there be either a whist Gorgon, a hideous Alecto, or a Tisiphone, I cannot yield obedience to your mandate. My nerves were yesterday evening unstrung by a similar misfortune, and I have only within the last half hour attuned them to the chords of harmony; so I pray you,

you, sweet messenger, get me excused; I do not merit to be precipitated from the celestial sphere to an opposite extreme."

"In defiance of your heavenly plea, my Lord, you must attend; behold, the Countess of Darnford and the lovely Mrs. Nugent await your arrival!"

Craven started up and exclaimed—"This moment I am at your disposal;" then as he retreated from the vicinity of Zitella, added—"Variety is my guardian genius, and I obey her call, wherever she invites my steps. Beauty without intellect, intellect without beauty; what a striking contrast! I must contemplate the varied excellence."

"What, my Lord, like a second Paris, to decide upon which to bestow the golden apple, a Pallas, or a Venus?"

"However moderns may be accused of degenerating from the firm and heroic virtues of self-government, which distinguished the ancients," returned his Lord-

 ship,

ship, "and being effeminized into culpable devotion to a fair exterior, yet I believe I may venture to anticipate my own judgment, and affirm, that the decision would be widely differing from the judge of yore; for the beauty of a Venus would boast no charm for me, if envious Minerva withheld her preferable attribute."

"Is this the table I am to play at?" cried Mrs. Nugent to Sir Edward Horton, as Lady Darnford and Craven advanced from opposite directions of the room.

"Yes, Madam; here arrive the remainder of our quartetto."

Each having taken a card, our fair commoner was paired with the Baronet, and seating herself down, *sans ceremonie,* in the chair near her, began shuffling the cards with great dexterity—"I love whist better than any other game—don't you, Madam?"

"The game of human life is more assimilated to my taste," said the Countess; "Fortune there rules with frolic sway, and dispenses

dispenses her *honours* with such laughable variability and inconsistency, that we never weary from regular method."

"I never heard of that game since I was born," returned the wife of Nugent, "and I therefore don't understand anything about how the honours went; but when I lived in Yorkshire, we used, in an evening when we had done work, to play at 'all fours;' and when Farmer Dobbins was at home, and in good-humour, then we all sat down and junketted together at 'beat the knave out of doors;' and you can't think how comfortable we were all, as merry as grigs."

"The lady would have an arduous task," said the Countess drily to Sir Edward, "if she were to perform the latter office in her new region."

"While we male creatures," returned the Baronet in a whisper, "gaze upon so much beauty, I fear we should be half inclined to quote poor Jenny Cameron's compliment, and admit that

"If to her share these petty errors fall,
Look to her face, and we forget them all."

The Countess viewed him contemptuously; but whatever she meant to have uttered was arrested by Mrs. Nugent turning towards her, with—"Shall you or I deal, Madam? for I suppose the gentlemen are too polite to take that advantage of us."

"Pray, Madam, avail yourself then of the circumstance, and take that trouble," added her Ladyship; and without further hesitation, she cut the cards, and began distributing them to the party.

A pause of some minutes ensued, which was broken by Mrs. Nugent exultingly exclaiming—"I have dealt to the purpose however, for I have made six tricks myself, so now I'll shut up shop; well, you have made one at last, partner, and that gives us the odd lift."

"*I* never doubted the oddity of the *lift* of fortune," said the Countess, "although I never

I never before heard it was gained by a *trick*."

"Well, that's so extraordinary," resumed the former, "for *I* know no other way to get it."

"Then I wonder you ever '*beat the knave out of doors*," said Lady Darnford; "he was surely too useful a personage in such a case to be discarded."

The speaker was not a little startled at this moment, by her fair opponent clapping the table with as much strength as her delicate formed hand permitted, while she screamed out—"Please to turn that trick again upon its back, and look at it; Mrs. What-d'ye-call-em has reneged."

"Mrs. What-d'ye-call-em," replied Lady Darnford, with infinite *sang froid*, "must first understand the crime of which she is accused, before she can attempt vindication, for really it is a new charge, one that never before came within my cognizance."

"Well, I'll forgive you for it with all my heart; but if you were to play with

some people, your excuse would not save your bacon; but to my thinking, you made the blunder by having that pack of cards at your elbow; so as I can see no use in two packs, when one is enough, pray, Mr. Thingembob," added she, turning to Lord Cuthbert, who stood near, wrapt in silent astonishment, " take this away, and put them on t'other table."

" I fear, Madam," returned Sir Edward smiling, " our opponents will not indulge us in the grant of your wishes; the established rules of Hoyle must not be infringed."

" I ask pardon," resumed the beautiful culprit, " but I did not know his name before; *you* are Mr. Hoyle then, I suppose?" addressing Lord Arthur Craven.

" No, really, Madam," returned his Lordship, with a profound bow, " I should be extremely sorry to change situation with that gentleman, for I am not impatient to seek that grim abode to which you would consign me."

" For

"For Heaven's sake, Mr. Nugent," exclaimed Lady Darnford, arresting the nabob's attention, who had till then been engaged in conversation with some ladies near; "in memory of our antique friendship, instruct me in the new language of our card-table. I never felt so unfortunately ignorant in my life; positively you must accept the office of interpreter, and initiate me into this novel dialect."

The crimson mounted into the face of poor Nugent, until it almost reached a purple hue, for he deeply felt her cruel appeal; but struggling to suppress emotion, he replied—"I have been too long banished from the *haut-ton*, to be enabled to afford your Ladyship any elucidation; my language has been, like my feelings, too much the offspring of untutored nature, either to understand, or be understood, by the artificial phraseology of the world of fashion," and with a cold bow he retreated, as Sir Edward, in a low voice, conceiving the Countess really not informed,

 whispered

whispered the lovely Fanny's connexion with the nabob.

"Vulgarism," returned the former, "seems to preside at this card-table, and therefore I, being forced into her territory, must fain embrace her language, and repeat, '*there are none so deaf as those who will not hear.*'"

Sir Edward smiled, and addressing Mrs. Nugent, enquired if she had completed the train of visits, of which she had complained so heavily the preceding morning?

"Oh yes; as easy as A, B, C, and how do you think I did it? why, Hubby (for you must know I always call Mr. Nugent so, for shortness) told me that I need not ask if the folks were at home; indeed," added she, with a kind of wink to enforce it, "he told me it would be better not, particularly at Lady Darnford's—Do you know Lady Darnford, Sir?"

The Baronet smiled, and bowed an affirmative.

"Well, when we got there, I was a little frightened,

frightened, for fear she should have come out of the door herself to invite me in; and as I remember once hearing she was '*an evil genius*,' I did not like the chance of falling into her clutches; so I told the footman to give a genteel knock at the door, and when the man opened it, not to say a word, but cram my card into his hand, whip up again behind the carriage before he could say 'Jack Roberson,' and drive off."

"Unfortunate Lady Darnford!" exclaimed the satiric original; "'tis pity, wond'rous pity, that her '*evil genius*,' without her concurrence, should have intervened between her and the entertainment such a visit must have inevitably produced."

"Lord love ye, I never meant to entertain her; how should I?"

"How could you avoid it rather, my dear Madam? for *sans compliment*, you have the most amusing talents I ever encountered in my walk through life."

 "I am

"I am sure, Ma'am, I ought to make you a courtesy for that agreeable speech, for you are the only woman who has said a civil thing of that sort to me since I have been in England. The gentlemen indeed praise me for my wit and vivacity, but I should mind more what such a quiet body as you would say, than all their rhodomontade."

"Heavens! only think of my becoming '*a quiet body*' at last," said Lady Darnford.

"No wonder, my dear Madam," rejoined Lord Arthur drily, "when the unquiet spirit roams so largely abroad."

The rubber was on the eve of conclusion when Zitella approached, and signified to the blooming object of merriment, that her carriage had been for some time in waiting.

"Never mind that, niece, I shan't pay a halfpenny the more if I keep it an hour; ben't as if I was in a jarvis, you know, when the carriage is my own, or my husband's, and that's the same thing."

The

The dismayed Zitella drew back with a confusion and distress highly gratifying to the envious ill-natured many, who had been attracted, even to a crowd, round the table, which presented such a singular union of exquisite beauty, and superlative vulgarity; and the universal smile of ridicule, which pervaded the countenances of the different spectators, added further poignancy to her humiliated feelings.

Sir Edward marked her varying cheek, and he alone seemed to deviate from the cruelty of seeking amusement at the expence of the unfortunate, but self-satisfied Fanny. His endeavours were rather to ward from her as much as possible the general ridicule, by dexterously turning, or palliating many an absurd speech; and this attentive tribute to the feelings of the lovely orphan, was fully appreciated by her grateful bosom.

The moment subsequent to our heroine's precipitate retreat, she recollected that Fanny might not have remembered, or

 even

even known, of the contribution for the candlestick, and whispered the custom of paying for cards.

"But I'd rather not do any such thing," cried the voluble fair one aloud; "I don't want these cards; I have got plenty at home, spick and span new ones."

"Place this," resumed the agitated Zitella, "upon the table, and I will explain the reason to you hereafter."

"Lord bless me, child!" she returned, "what can make you so obstinate; I tell you Hubby won't let me give the folks second-hand cards; and if I did, I think it would be much genteeler to send to Mrs. Harley to-morrow morning, and make the bargain when she is at leisure, and not buy them before the face of all the company. I can't think what makes you so saving to-night; I never saw you stingy before," and so saying, she walked off, while the hand of her distressed friend laid the tribute-money in its place.

"It is an absurd custom," rejoined Sir

Edward,

Edward, with much courtesy addressing our heroine, "one '*more honoured in the breach than the observance.*' Mrs. Nugent has afforded us a very *natural* satire on this odious fashion, and proved her own mind happily unsophisticated by its erring tenets in the school of fashion."

To the *manner* in which the Baronet dispensed this varnish over the words of the relative connexion, the substance was indebted for its pleasing effect; there was a magic colouring in that manner, which Horton, of all men, could best adapt to a desired purpose.

No sooner was the rubber concluded, than Lady Darnford sought Nugent, who fearfully lingered near his wife, feeling the inclination, and yet wanting the ability, to leave her to the torturing mirth of those around.

"In former days," commenced the malicious Countess, "you were an excellent chronicle of *nominal* knowledge; I have therefore sought you, to gain information

as

as to the appellation by which I am to distinguish that beautiful *unique*, who recently graced our card-table, Farmer Dobbins's *bel-esprit*, the *elegante*, who was so kindly anxious I should '*save my bacon*.' Behold her now advancing!' and if you have a taste for *la comique*, entreat a second recitation of that ludicrous anecdote of the '*evil genius*,' or the dexterity of '*Jack Roberson*;' but first I must learn her name, that I may immortalize her in my *souvenirs* as a beautiful *natural* curiosity."

"That lady, Madam," said the nabob, all the *fierté* of his proud spirit arousing to aid a defiance of this perfectly comprehended ignorance, "that lady claims the name of *Nugent*, and as such I am happy to acknowledge her."

"Although nothing of a fashionist, I must for once borrow a term, and assure you, my good Sir, I am not one of those credulous individuals who will be thus easily the dupe of so evident a *quiz*. Can I for a moment suppose," she added, sarcastically

castically surveying him, "that the polished, the *fastidious* Benedict of theory, could overlook the boundaries of the most *moderate* ambition, and not only be contented, but '*happy to acknowledge*' the helpmate before me? no, no, the jest may be a very good one, but I certainly will not become the object of it."

"Your Ladyship has a talent for *badinage*," said Nugent, "and assumes, I find, the infidel at pleasure; nor can I wonder at the *error*, since the unsophisticated virtues of my lovely Fanny, in your estimation, wear no winning charms; yet when *feeling*, *generosity*, *delicacy*, and *charity*, are thrown into the scale of beauty, it may be found not so light of proper balance, even did the unerring hand of Lady Darnford poise the equilibrium."

"*Justice*, my good Sir, ought not to be employed on such occasions," was the reply; "for unfortunately she is blind to evince her impartiality; therefore *beauty* would lose its weighty influence; 'delicacy,

cacy, feeling, generosity, and charity,' in this instance, would too surely lose their principal support."

At the moment, the lovely cause of these bitter sarcasms approached, and with one of the most bewitching smiles exclaimed—

"The folks are all going into the next room, Hubby, for one of the princes is come; and as I never saw a prince in all my life, no not even in a play, I want you to hustle in with me, for they scrowge in so thick, they won't make way for me; and though I begged two girls to help me on, they only laughed."

Lady Darnford fixed her searching orbs full on the countenance of Nugent; a glow of triumph passed over her features, as she beheld the struggle of anguished pride painted in every line of his; while regaining all that courteous elegance, that refined grace he in happier days had displayed, and which was again assumed, only from the cruel motive of rendering the uncouth language and unpolished tone of the

the rival Fanny the more strikingly conspicuous from the immediate contrast, the torturing satirist, with polished address, offered an apology, couched in such terms of elegance, and delivered with so much apparent mortification and distress at her own unfortunate mistake, that a mere spectator of the moment would have doubted which of the two was most entitled to their sympathy; but Nugent felt the cruel wish to wound; he was fully aware that the character under which she sought to appear was assumed; and silently, profoundly bowing to her Ladyship, he took the hand of his beautiful wife and led her from the spot; while the Countess, maliciously hovered near them the remainder of the evening, and with a ludicrous affectation of sorrow, amused her friends around, by detailing her egregious blunder!

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Say, mighty love, and teach my song,
To whom the sweetest joys belong,
And who the happy pairs?
Whose yielding hearts and joining hands,
Find blessings twisted with their bands,
To soften all *their* cares?
Not sordid souls, of earthly mould,
Who, drawn by kindred charms of gold,
To chill embraces move:
So two rich mountains of Peru,
May rush to wealthy marriage too,
And make a world of love.

WATTS.

A matrimonial Candidate of the present World.

SOON after breakfast the next day, Mr. Nugent smilingly told his niece, that at her convenience in the course of the morning, he must request an interview of an hour.

Zitella

Zitella professed herself at the moment ready to attend his summons, and playfully rising, placed her arm within his, inviting him to the conference in his library. The nabob assured her it was a matter of moment, in which the future temporal welfare of at least two human beings was involved.

She jocularly hinted her apprehension of his secret, but felt astonished, when, with assumed gravity, he demanded her attention, by uttering "Lord Cuthbert."

Our heroine, with unequivocal astonishment, re-echoed the name! a sportive laugh succeeded, for she was fully aware that his Lordship's address was intended only for *the Heiress;* but the momentary risibility gave way to mortification. She had never been an advocate, at any period, for love at first sight, and it would have afforded not one pleasurable sensation to her chaste bosom, to have been the object of such a passion; for as countenance was but too often deceptive at all times, she

was

was not so perfect a convert to the doctrine of Lavater, as to imagine all the recommendatory qualities of heart and head were so legibly written on the exterior, as to justify the assertions of attachment from a rational man, when he steps forward, as on the present occasion, to lay claim to a return of affection, or to receive full credence in a thinking mind, for the professions of his own.

The parties had met only three times, without the smallest previous knowledge, and at each of these meetings, little more had passed than what is usual between strangers in ordinary society; had Lord Cuthbert therefore been even far superior in attraction to what he was, our orphan had not hesitated in a negative decision; she therefore begged Mr. Nugent would, on her behalf, undertake the office of ambassador; and as it was by no means her intention to extend the anchor of hope, on which to rest, at once to conclude the negociation.

In

In vain did the guardian urge delay, and the wish that she would allow herself time for reflection; he expatiated on the noble antiquity of the family honours of him who addressed her; he represented the extensive connexions, whose elevation in power, at this more immediate period, encreased the relative recommendations of the matrimonial candidate; and he painted, with redundant colouring, the distinctions of wealthy aggrandizement, which would centre in this heir of the Marquisate of Pomfret, when the present superannuated peer should close his career. A worldly landscape, representing the meretricious but brilliant pleasures which would attend this solicited alliance, completed the faithful sketch.

Zitella smiled—" But, my dear Sir; in enumerating the costly embroidered stately trappings, you appear to have forgotten the *individual* who supports these attractive appendages; or has the imbecile mortal

mortal sunk beneath a weight he is ill calculated to sustain?"

"By no means will I allow you to draw such a conclusion; but even if it were so, we cannot expect to compress perfection, or every matrimonial recommendation and requisite, in an individual; the creature man is composed of a heterogeneous jumble of the good and bad attributes of heaven and earth; and if we meet with no glaring vices, no flagrant dereliction from moral principle, or the forms of society, and this be united to the worldly recommendations Lord Cuthbert you will admit possesses, why in my opinion, a rational woman ought to seek no more; a young female of rank and fortune must never indulge in the romantic vagaries of the heart; she had far better never acknowledge the existence of one; if placed in an elevated situation, her family claims from her a passive hand, else would our nobility soon become no longer populous; politic connexions are absolutely

lutely requisite for its support, and it is a tax on inclination, that from various motives cannot be repealed—it is a tax, however, that most young persons would willingly pay, for who would not grant a subsidy to retain a possession? indeed, a proper education soon moulds the feelings to pliant obedience in this point, and this mode of education has now arrived at its pinnacle of perfection; nor can 'More Strictures,' 'Hamilton Letters,' or 'Edgeworth Admonition,' deter from its pursuance: the village maid may indulge in the rural romance of reciprocal love, but the courtly *Heiress* is doomed by fate, from the vigils of her birth, to answer the calls of justifiable ambition."

"A '*misery*' which, in my opinion, is an antidote to fortune's favours," replied Zitella; "surely it is a slavish tax, at which each free-born bosom must revolt; nay, even perjury alone can swear compliance, unless the marriage oath be con-

veniently transferable to the appendages of the bridegroom, and we vow '*love, honour*, and *obedience*' to that rank and wealth which center in the hymeneal votary; yes, my dear uncle, I candidly confess that my inclinations would rather point to a rational commoner than an irrational peer."

"And purchase the *poor* man's love?" said Nugent drily. "I never could have imagined that the miseries of a mother were so lightly estimated by the child she loved."

"You have with dextrous ease probed the very core of my sensitive heart, even in the spot most vulnerable; still it will not yield to your endeavour. It is not the possession of ample wealth which will bar the human mind from grasping at its encrease; as the *Heiress*, I accord to Lord Cuthbert my thanks for the honour of his election, but as Lady Zitella Herbert, I reject from him every further matrimonial advance."

advance." And the countenance of our heroine pourtrayed the acuteness of her feelings.

"You have misconstrued my motives," returned Nugent. "I by no means wish to force an encouragement of this alliance, but I conceive it a duty annexed to the situation which I hold, to represent to you the advantages attendant upon so desirable an union, and to deliver my own opinion, and even advice, as decidedly in favour of the acceptance of his Lordship's proposals. I was myself once near becoming the victim of authority, in a similar situation, and I know there are beings to whom the heart may feel a repugnance reason cannot sanction; and yet, Zitella, there are moments when I wish I had yielded to the arbitrary mandate; for I had then never felt the pang of suffering from self-reproach. Had I not been stimulated by impetuous and vindictive passion against maternal command, I had never visited the shores of India; I should, in all

 probability,

probability, never have encountered the beauteous Fanny; then had I not been tempted by the delirium of love, into a derogatory union! Oh, Fanny, at once the wife of my ardent affection, and the bane of my repose! Zitella, there is a nerve of my heart, that is too sensitive to bear the slightest touch—it is pride, haughty, imperious pride, and yet each hour it bears the torture of the most agonizing pressure; for can there be a pang more severe, than that which causes the very life-blood to recede from the heart that loves, to form the blush that mantles to shame at its object? Again I repeat, my dear girl, be warned by example, and rest assured, that unequal marriages produce not that happy effect, on a near view, that the light of illusive fancy yields to the connubial perspective! Young, lovely, and accomplished, possessed of an excellent heart and head, distinguished by rank, and the favourite of fortune, you may almost be said to be able to command the devo-

tion

tion of any man you may deign to honour with your attention. Believe me, another principal misery that attends these ill-assimilated connexions, arises from the pain of never being able to ascertain, whether we really possess the heart of the favoured individual; grateful affection is a cold return for ardent love, and jealous suspicion will invade the breast of strong and acute susceptibility; and the truly delicate female bosom would rather wed the man whom she had inspired with a firm attachment, although that attachment be unreturned, than voluntarily sink into the cold, lifeless, frigid arms of him she loves, without reciprocal regard. Remember also, that censure, nay, contempt, ever follow in worldly estimation the female who degrades herself and family, to gratify a passionate inclination, who, forgetting her own dignity, descends from the walk in which Heaven has decreed her from birth to move, and seeks, in a companion for life, an inferior.

Remember still further, that mercenary views are far more likely solely to influence him who requires the aid of wealth, than he who, like Lord Cuthbert, can lay equivalent riches on the altar of Hymen. And now, my dear Zitella, an engagement calls me hence; but to evince my aversion to arbitrary or harsh proceedings towards my ward, I will, without further expostulation, comply with your wishes, in regard to the rejection of this noble suitor."

"Oh, my mother! my dear misjudging parent!" exclaimed the pensive orphan, as the door closed on her uncle, "why did you not suffer your child unfettered to pursue the weary journey of life? why extort a fatal promise, to accept a fellow-traveller on the irksome road? in a single state, I would become the useful appendage of the sphere of my attraction; the wealth which Heaven has delegated to my care, would have been appropriated to beneficent purposes; and I should have escaped the

the horror of becoming the victim of avarice, the perhaps convenient ballast of a miser's speculative adventure!"

"Zitella, niece, Zitella, I say!" in the well known voice of Mrs. Nugent, descending the stairs, forcibly arrested the sorrowing reflection, and she arose to answer the unceremonious appeal for her presence.

"Only think how unlucky! there now! it is the first day I ever told a lie in my life, and think what has come of it? why, I bade the footman to say we were both not at home, because I was dressing to go out in the carriage, and you were busy with Hubby; well, and only think, here has been the great clergyman, and his wife, and with them Mr. Molesworth, and here are their cards; I would not but have seen that kind good young man, upon no account whatever; but no profit ever came from lying, as Farmer Dobbins used to tell us; and so here's a proof of that, in my disappointment at a first setting out, for they were off in a twinkle, and the coach out of

sight in a jiffy as soon as the cards were given in; and there was no catching them back again, though I tried for it—but come, are you not ready? why, we shan't have no time to go to half the shops I want to buy things at."

Zitella made an apology for not being prepared to accompany her, as she had been detained by her guardian in his library, and requested Mrs. Nugent not to delay the shopping expedition on her account, as she was not inclined to leave home.

Fanny good-humouredly nodded assent, and the fair contrast separated.

The following day, the visit of the Ancaster party was returned, and equally successless, in a personal meeting with any of the family; a dinner-invitation was however accepted, for an early day in the subsequent week; and Zitella, we must confess, looked forward to its arrival with some anxiety, for curiosity, if not interest, had been highly raised, to see and converse

with

with the all-perfect hero of Mrs. Mulgrave's memoir; sooner she thought it not likely they should meet, having, in cursory conversation, heard the Dean reply to some enquiry of Lady Darnford concerning his young friend, that he was going to pass a few days in Oxfordshire, for the purpose of transacting some college-business for Colonel Fullerton, with an *élevé* of that gentleman, who was at that university.

The attentions of Sir Edward Horton were unremitting; he was ever a welcome guest at the table of the nabob, to which he had a general invitation accorded him by the fair president, who was lavish in extolling his praises to Lady Zitella, and rallying her on the important conquest; concluding each harangue by saying, that to be sure he was but a baronet, and they said a lord was a better thing; but for her part, she could not see why, for she could be but a lady at last, whether she married one or t'other, and therefore it could make no difference to her that she could discover.

Zitella gravely affirmed the impression was ill-founded, and earnestly conjured her to desist from a continuance of the unpleasant theme, more especially as the very many insinuations she uttered before the Baronet, in regard to her prognostics of his success, were particularly distressing to the feelings of her to whom they related.

This very indelicate procedure was indeed calculated much to disturb the sensitive orphan, who contrasted her late protectress with the one she now acknowledged, and the memory of the past enhanced the bitterness of the present. Severely at these moments did she mentally reprobate the erring conduct of that uncle, who had entailed both on her and himself mortification and disgrace, from a connexion prompted by sensual passion.

It may however here be necessary to mention, that Zitella's frequent enquiries after the stranger who had received the contusion on his arm, in his successful attempt to save her from injury, had been

some mornings after acknowledged by him in a visit of thanks; but as she had been absent, his card, bearing the name of "Lister," had been received, instead of himself; and she understood from Mr. Neville, that he was a younger brother of the baronet of that appellation, whom she had met at the house of Lady Darnford.

Several parties intervened before that at the house of the Dean of L——, and the same vulgarity marked every action, every movement, and every word of Mrs. Nugent: elated by the ready flattery of her male admirers, Fanny in reality believed that the mirth she excited, and which was but too often irrepressible, was a tribute to her wit, and that her own loud laugh was actually the enchanting *naïveté* of genuine sportive vivacity, that sycophantic zeal so often whispered; for the beauty of the nabob's wife attracted each passing libertine, who viewed her as a convenient object for licentious desires.

Her understanding was by nature weak, and she had not benefited by an education calculated to strengthen the mental soil, at a period when the ground is most pliant to culture; it was now incapable of receiving the seeds of instruction, or if it did, they never sprang into life. The effects of the luxuriant aliment which was administered to the ignorant Fanny, was rapidly visible. Now, presumption, vanity, and opinionated confidence, were the characteristics of the once modest unassuming tender of '*Farmer Dobbins's pigs;*' yet the lowly offspring of a cot was still free from vice. Gratitude yet maintained its sway over her heart, and she never hesitated to avow her obligations to that man, who had raised her from indigent dependence to affluent distinction. She never seemed to feel the slightest wish to conceal her humble birth, her early avocations, since she proclaimed her knowledge that she owed her elevation to the disinterested affection

affection of Nugent, which she conceived reflected lustre on the goodness of his heart; and she delighted in expressing her sense of his generosity and kindness, towards a poor girl like herself.

CHAP. IX.

"How much perverted now are female ways,
Since days of yore, and Bess's golden days!"

A Scene from Life.

THE destined day for the dinner-party at the Dean of L——'s arrived—the day on which Marian Ancaster was first to emerge from the nursery, ere fifteen years had quite revolved since she first viewed the light of day.

The ceremonious circle which precedes the important summons to the eating vocation, was already completed, but no Clarence Molesworth graced the room; he was yet detained at Oxford; and disappointment attended the information to more individuals than one, for the Misses Clairmond

mond and Harley had anxiously desired to behold this admired Molesworth, who even Lady Darnford did not satirize.

Each was engaged discoursing rather with their next neighbour, than encouraging more general conversation, when Mrs. Ancaster, who had quitted the room a few minutes previous, returned with a young companion resting on her arm, who was at once announced as Miss Ancaster.

The infantine lineaments of cherub-loveliness, were those which spoke in the simplicity of beauty appertaining to the countenance of Marian; the flaxen curls which naturally played over her ivory forehead, the cambric frock tucked considerably above the ancle, the sleeves caught up at the extremity of each shoulder by a string of white cornelian, and the light vandyked lace, just fringing the circlet of the bosom, where it first rises into form, added to the childish appearance of the new belle. A Hebe bloom sat on either cheek, her blue celestial eyes were lost be-

neath

neath their downcast lids, and on the rich roseate of her under lip, a quivering tremour played. She clung to the arm of her maternal protectress, and with hesitating step fearfully advanced. A general presentation succeeded; but Marian returned not the greeting bow, for resting her head on the shoulder of Mrs. Ancaster, she hid her face from view with childish timidity.

The fascinating mother imprinted an encouraging kiss on the glowing cheek of the little flutterer, and with winning tenderness pronounced—"My sweet girl, this *naïf* manner is very captivating to me, but to our friends it is distressing; you compel them to feel that you would be more at home in your school-room, and this impression extracts all the pleasure your society would otherwise afford; make but an effort, and you will conquer it."

"What a fascinating picture of maternal love!" exclaimed Sir Horace Lister. "Woman, dear enchanting woman, the partner of our cares, the solace of our joys, surely

surely never appears with such resistless charms, as when encouraging the rising blossoms of connubial creation."

"Resistless Ancaster!" repeated Sir Edward Horton, in a half-whisper to Zitella, "what magic of art do you possess, when the witching manner, the tender expression of merely pleasing feature, can render you at this moment an object of greater interest, than even that daughter who boasts the blooming attractions of Hebe youth!"

"The sweet gi l," as her mother had styled her, indeed felt that this public admonition had arrested attention; she yet attempted to comply with the expressed wish of Mrs. Ancaster, and raising her head, ca t a timid look around the room, and then again clung, with renewed terror, to the arm she yet retained. Lord Arthur Craven assiduously placed a chair, and offered to lead her towards it, but she withdrew her hand, with a kind of diffident apprehension. Several of the company particularly addressed her, with the most encouraging smiles,

smiles, but her concise answers were scarcely articulate.

"The girl is a natural," whispered Miss Harley to Neville.

"Rather playing a tune of *flats*," he returned; "for upon my soul, I cannot trace a note of the *natural* in the composition."

"And you are favouring us with a *sharp execution* to diversify the theme, eh?" said Beechley.

Zitella, really pitying the painful diffidence under which Miss Ancaster appeared to suffer, advanced, with the hope of relieving her by interrogations; but this, instead of producing the desired effect, only encreased that *mauvaise honte*, before but too obvious; and essaying to speak, an universal trembling announced total inability: finding therefore that an attempt at conversation rather distressed than diverted, she returned to her former seat, while her station was the next moment occupied by Lord Arthur.

Engaged

Engaged in discoursing with the little groupe, which more immediately were ranged near an ottoman where she sat, Zitella had momentarily forgotten the juvenile novice, when her attention was arrested by Craven, who advanced, exclaiming—"Make room for me, in mercy, room, my Lady!"

Our heroine mechanically obeyed his request, when throwing his lofty figure into the seat thus procured, he reclined back, apparently from extreme fatigue.

"Are you, most noble Proteus, now preparing to personify *Le malade imaginaire?*" enquired Zitella, with a smile.

"Rather *Le malade en vérité*," returned Craven; "I cannot articulate—for God's sake do not compel me!"

"I have not the slightest inclination, I do assure you," was the reply; "your Lordship is at full liberty to play either the *Silent* or the *Absent* Man."

"Prompt that," rejoined Lord Arthur, unclosing his till then locked eyelids, and fixing

fixing his refulgent orbs on her countenance, without moving from his lounging attitude, not even looking towards Miss Clairmond, whom he now addressed—"Fair Euphemia, in very compassion lend me that *Eau de jasmin,* or I shall faint, absolutely faint with *ennui!*"

"You are a wayward mortal," returned the former; "it is vain to contend with your whims;" and she actually removed from her neck an elegant Lisbon chain, to which was affixed an essence-box, in the fantastical form of a monitor of Time.

Lord Arthur affected to attempt rising to receive it, but, as if overpowered by the effort, he sunk again on the ottoman.—"Pardon me, I cannot rise; I am annihilated beyond the power of motion."

Euphemia smiled graciously, and presented it.

"Thank you, thank you; that is kind, faith, most kind," returned the capricious Craven; and he twisted the fragile chain around his hand, with a carelessness that threatened

threatened the destruction of its delicate links.

"I do not condemn you, my Lord, for the illustration you afford of the hypothesis of the new school," said Lady Darnford, "since my own sex, I am sorry to see, countenance, nay, encourage it;" and she threw a glance of petrifying contempt on the pliant Miss Clairmond.

Craven affected not to hear the observation, and sat with smelling-bottle in hand, and eyes closed, reclining back on the ottoman, while Lady Zitella Herbert no further noticed his vicinity. At length, arousing from his apparent slumber, he exclaimed, with a tone of surprise—"Why do you not speak, sweet Lady?"

"Because I did not wish to incur the penalty of a reply, was laconically repeated.

"If you wish to display contempt for a man, never evince yourself offended," replied Arthur; "resentment proves the object

object to be of consequence, or he could not produce it."

"Be assured you are sometimes mistaken; total inattention is no symptom of interest."

"Then must I acknowledge a truism," subjoined the changeable Craven, in a lowered voice, "and avow, that to become an object of inattention to Lady Zitella Herbert, would be in reality one of the most sensible mortifications of my life."

"The observation your Lordship has offered is one proof," she continued, "of the acceptance of that remark, which some writer has tendered, '*notice the reply of a female with a compliment, if you can; if you cannot, notice it yet.*'"

"Did I compliment? I have really forgotten what I said; I never *memorise*."

"But, Lord Arthur," lisped Euphemia, "you have not informed us concerning the cause of your wondrous fatigue, and I am curious to know."

"Barbarous

"Barbarous inhumanity, to remind unhappy man of his distresses," repeated Craven theatrically; then in a dolorous tone subjoined, "The ideot—the ideot!"

"To whom, my Lord, do you allude by that flattering appellation?"

"If I must perforce speak on the torturing theme," continued the former, "why, I will e'en submit with quiescent grace—Know then, most curious querist, she is no other than the blooming daughter of our kind host. I thought her personable, at least she won a moment's fancy, and I therefore thought to compromise the annihilation of a few moments, in speaking to the mortal Hebe; now it is my habitual method, when I address a woman for the first time, who appears worth the scrutiny, very considerately to force her observations; by saying little myself, I suffer her to find subject, and by that means discover the fertility of her conversational talents, or else I start each different topic, and leave her to discuss them, by which I analyse her

her powers of discrimination and elocution."

"But suppose, my Lord, the Hebe of the moment were inclined to extend the retort courteous?"

"There is no apprehension of that," said Euphemia, in an audible whisper; "where is the female who would not feel gratified by having a Craven to listen?"

Zitella blushed—it was for the dignity of her sex, thus to behold them eagerly extend further nourishment to feed the vanity of the presumptuous Arthur, who resumed—"But in the present instance, nought of intelligible answer could I obtain; still, from the contradiction of my wayward nature, this kind of stupid indifference, of most uncommon female taciturnity, stimulated me to exertion; I aimed at nothing less than to work a miracle, and make the dumb voluble; but vain was the effort—negatives and affirmatives were the sole spring the pretty puppet's head contained!"

"A dry

"A dry spring, eh?" said Beechley.

Lord Arthur continued—"Perseverance I for once adopted as my motto, and I tried its powers; but they proved so impotent, that I renounced the novel mode in despair; and quitting pretty imbecility, I sought restoration in the vicinity of intellectual beauty. Ah! what is this bauble of mere external excellence, when void of that gem of intrinsic worth? a mere ideot's toy, at best a sightly sport of nature, 'signifying nothing;' but," he added, "here," at once bursting into energetic vehemence, as he warmly pressed the hand of Zitella, here

> "——— doth beauty dwell.
> Mind, mind alone (bear witness, earth and heaven!)
> The living fountain in itself contains
> Of beauteous and sublime: here, hand in hand,
> Sit paramount the graces; here enthron'd,
> Celestial Venus, with divinest airs,
> Invites the soul to never-fading joy!"

An expression of mingled surprise and admiration overspread the countenance of our

our heroine, as involuntarily she had naturally raised her eyes to the animated speaker, with an emotion of astonishment, at the sudden recitation of these lines from Akenside.

It was no artificial Craven that now met her view, for he had momentarily resigned himself to the indulgence of that native energy, that impetuous strength of feeling, which was the characteristic of his nature. That soul of fire lent a luminous ray to its reflector, and diffused a glowing warmth over the speaking tablet of feature; his fine colossal form, animated by the inspiration of its immortal tenant, towered in striking supremacy.

The gaze of those around was fully arrested by the attractive reciter, and the distinguished object of the address; but Craven appeared not to observe the attention he had drawn towards himself and Lady Zitella Herbert; or had he done so, would have been gratified, rather than annoyed by the circumstance; for that celebrity

celebrity should attend his every action, appeared the most anxious desire in the breast of this young noble.

Even Lady Darnford viewed him with ill-disguised admiration; and at once foregoing her usual manner, exclaimed—"How lamentable, how truly deplorable is it, that a being like Lord Arthur Craven should voluntarily pervert the gifts of nature, and disfigure, nay, deform, an image of all that is great and noble!"

Craven started with equal astonishment at the unexpected panegyric of the satirical Countess, while with quickness he rejoined—"I could equally exclaim, my Lady, in similar guise, and marvel at the perversion of your talents, exerted only to convey sarcastic irony or severe reproof, when calculated to shine in the most extensive and elevated paths of excellence."

"We meet not on equal ground, Lord Arthur; you have volunteered the envelopement of yours in the varied garb of

idle folly, but mine have been perverted by circumstance!"

Her lips turned pale as she spoke, and her frame was momentarily agitated, but the expression of her countenance was under command.

The attention of Nugent was irresistibly arrested; something like compunction, like self-contempt, penetrated his heart; for at that moment the loud and silly laugh of the beautiful wife of his own election reached him; he felt humiliation for his own conduct, and interest for her, whom he was painfully convinced he had deeply wounded; too truly he comprehended the "circumstance" which had chilled the warm affections, the vivid feelings of Sophia Howard; and with pain, he contemplated the wreck of those generous sentiments which once had animated the breast of that unfortunate girl. He rose from his seat opposite the injured female, anxious to conceal an emotion new to his bosom

bosom—that of pity for the being whose happiness he had unregardedly wrecked, the playfellow of his infant sports, the juvenile friend of his early years, whom he had sacrificed, without a regret, to his own capricious fancy, whose many virtues had been annihilated by the unkindness, the ingratitude, and desertion of him she loved, whom she had, by her parents, been encouraged to regard as the future partner of her life!

A moment's reflection had convinced the Countess of her own impulsive improvidence in the recent speech; and with a manner so naturally playing the ridiculous, that it deceived all around, save the man she most wished to mislead, she suddenly resumed—"Positively I have been perverted by reflection, and am like nothing on earth but a piece of old black silk."

A general laugh at the odd simile followed, and an explanation of it was requested by Lord Arthur.

"Nay, it is very visible," said Lady

 Darnford;

Darnford; "the property of the sable dye is to absorb the particles of light with which it is surrounded, until it loses its natural hue; so I, my Lord, encircled by the depravities and follies of the promiscuous multitude in the luminous sphere of fashion, have irresistibly imbibed just a sufficient portion of the gas, to pervert the colour of my own disposition, and display it to the world in doleful plight; but you, Craven, who have early embosomed the vivifying rays of genius, should dispense the light of Heaven, not dim its lustre by that extinguisher—caprice."

"Surely," exclaimed Euphemia, "it was rather in pity than in hate that the brilliance of his attractions should be temporarily veiled, or, like another Jove, the female world might be unable to sustain his divine presence."

"Indeed," said Arabella Harley, "I coincide with your remark; for were Lord Arthur Craven always thus animated, he would prove irresistible indeed, and tower

supreme over every competitor for female favour."

The cheeks of Zitella were tinged with heightened bloom. Spectators conceived it but the emotion of delighted vanity, at the marked sentiment of admiration which had given birth to the poetic appropriation of the quoted lines of the enthusiastic Akenside. They divined not that the vivid blush was excited by that unqualified disregard to the modesty of nature, a Clairmond and a Harley had evinced; she blushed for the honour of her sex, in this humiliation of feminine dignity, thus openly to lavish the encomiums of personal adulation on the vain and arrogant heir of ducal distinction.

There was something in the manner of each, which inspired disgust and contempt in the bosom of our unperverted orphan; for she was as yet not sufficiently *au fait* in fashion, to be reconciled to the *transfer* of courting ceremony from the male to the female part of creation; yet did her bosom

 yield

yield full accordance to the correctness of the Harley observation; for even her fastidious heart admitted, that the elegant enthusiast could render himself dangerously attractive.

Ye rural fair, regard not this conversation as the fictitious nonsense of a poor author's brain; be convinced that he who penned these pages will never mislead you by a false representation of life; I would merely present to view a sketch of scenes of which I have myself been a spectator; I would translate you from the contemplation of mere country angels, to those of a far different region, from the "household gods," to the divinities abroad and "AT HOME," according to their own specified declaration; I would paint you, man, exulting man, the creature of presumption, and the spoiled child of female devotion, the bantling, reared in the nursery of woman's derogatory attention, who, by slavish servile *flattery*, and ready adulation to a handsome person, render the monsters of fashion

what

what they are, then rail at the vanity of man, protest it to be quite insupportable, and sigh for the days of a Grandison!

Clairmond and Harley are but faint portraits of the females of the present hour, who seek, with subtle address, to lisp the dear title of a lord and master, alias a coronetted carriage, a well-stored card-purse, and a *licensed* covert in *whatever* manner fancy prompts.

Among the guests of the evening, Captain Lister was announced, which drew the attention of our orphan to the *entré* of her Tower acquaintance, whose arm yet rested in a sling. A mutual exchange of bows soon brought them into conversation, when the young soldier claimed an acquaintance, near four years since, in her native spot. He recalled to her recollection a first rencontre in the house of Dr. Moreland, and several successive times, at a little cottage Mrs. Mulgrave had taken for change of air, after a severe indisposition, though .he expressed no surprise at

her want of recognition, as three years since passed in a West-India climate, had materially changed the once fair complexion, and given greater maturity to his appearance than that lapse of time would probably have done in a more congenial atmosphere.

Lady Zitella regarded with pleasure him who now recalled to memory, by many a trifling anecdote, those peaceful days of happiness and childish frivolity which passed beneath the wing of a parent, always recalled with grateful affection; whose fostering smile nurtured each budding germ of benevolence and philanthropy; for then had suspicion never found entrance in her heart, nor the recital of *the miseries of an heiress* awakened the dread of a similar fate.

The conversation of the new friends continued long uninterrupted, and appeared to afford mutual pleasure. Captain Lister requested a claim to the visiting list of Mrs. Nugent, under the privilege of

former

former acquaintance with our heroine, and was immediately presented by her to that lady, who in her usual style exclaimed —"Gemini, what a disappointment! and so what I thought might have turned out so well, comes to nothing at all at last; for instead of a lord, or a duke's son, or an ambassador, why, '*uncle Gerald*' is but a poor captain, and I dares to say not worth a groat!"

The reader will easily divine the astonishment of Lister, and the confusion and distress of Zitella, as this loud whisper alike met the ear of each, although intended only for one; the latter, however, turning abruptly from Mrs. Nugent, directed the attention of the wondering soldier to another part of the room; and he, feeling more for her situation than his own, appeared entirely absorbed by the new subject, from which they were however soon diverted, in being joined by, Sir Edward Horton, whose manner evidenced the wish of wholly engrossing their fair

 companion;

companion; the unassuming Lister made way for the determined Baronet; but Zitella, unwilling to resign her rational newly-found old acquaintance, lent as much attention to the one as to the other, although the manner of Sir Edward marked unequivocally his devotion, as well as desire, to attach her conversation to himself; after therefore a few faint, though vain efforts to render it general, Lister retired from the contest, and soon afterwards joined a card-table.

No other event of consequence occurred this evening, except a presentation to a young naval officer, the brother of Euphemia Clairmond, whose open countenance and candid manner pleased, though they failed to interest; he possessed a tolerable understanding from nature, neither cultivated by superior education, or polished beyond the usual standard of a tar of original growth; yet there was a spontaneous unaffected generosity of disposition, which was more likely to engage

the

the approbation of the fastidious heiress, than the more polished elegance of the mercenary herd of tonish admirers, with which she was conscious of being surrounded.

CHAP. X.

Let the fools who follow Fortune live upon her smiles.

SOUTHERN.

An Heiress as she may be.

Two days after, a long engagement summoned the Nugents and their young guest to a party at the house of Mrs. Beechley, in Devonshire-place, the aged mother of the gentleman we have already introduced to the reader by a similar name.

The conspicuously elegant rooms of this dowager of *fête champêtre* celebrity, were thronged by a mass of heterogeneous individuals; for her parties were in general rather crowded than select; and the noble duchess was often elbowed by the wealthy cit, who aspired, by the labours of industry, to

to attain the western height of opulent dissipation.

The room into which our heroine had roamed, was already inundated by the gay multitude, and individuals were lost in one general herd, when anxious to obtain some degree of air, to renovate from the effect of a suffocating atmosphere, she sought and obtained a seat near the door, where a passing current fanned the overpowered inmates of this unnaturally heated temple of pleasure.

Lord Arthur was at her side, sporting the ridiculous, and tracing caricatures of the mottled and varied group, in the white mount of a fan, which she had thoughtlessly suffered him to retain. Sir Edward Horton kept his station on her right hand, and was assiduously seeking to entertain and interest; while Clairmond, all spirit, ingenuousness, and ease, was lounging at the back of the chair, making free undisguised observations on the passing objects, as the loud voice of the domestic usher

usher announced—" Mrs. and Miss Ancaster, and Mr. Molesworth."

Zitella heard not the conclusion of the insinuating compliment just uttered by the Baronet; she regarded not the new-drawn sketches the mischievous Craven now presented to her inspection; she attended not to the laughing remark of Clairmond, on the ridiculous appearance of juvenility in garb of an aged devotee at the shrine of pleasure—no, her whole attention was in one instant absorbed at the name of Molesworth; and she contemplated, with mingled curiosity and admiration, this highly-estimated youth, as he entered with the fascinating mother and timid daughter on either arm.

His manly figure promised even superior attraction to what it at present exhibited, if health had aided its perfection; but the invalid was yet visibly stamped on his intelligent countenance, which, although nearly divested of colouring, beamed intellectual animation; his whole appearance marked

singular

singular elegance, while grace and dignity filling up the whole, left the fastidious observer scarcely a possible flaw in the exquisitely fine outline.

The eyes of our heroine followed the conspicuously interesting Clarence, as he went through the usual form of presentation to the different individuals who crossed the path of the Ancaster party. At last, and we must own, not without some little variation of complexion, she heard him utter some passing observation on herself, at the very moment when having moved her seat, she became, by the meandering throng of numbers, placed unconsciously behind the spot where he then stood; it concluded with—"I thought I saw the look of recognition from your eyes, Miss Ancaster; do you know the lady I pointed to your observation a few minutes since, though I have again lost her in the crowd?"

"Yes, slightly," she replied, "but my parents more intimately; she really is, I

have

have heard, a very amiable girl; shall I introduce you?"

"I acknowledge it is a countenance on which I could with pleasure rest," he returned; "there is great intelligence, beauty, and benevolence. I shall feel happy in the allowed privilege of addressing her; but first tell me who is she, and what is your impression of her merits?"

"She is the only child of the late Lord Darnford; her distinction, Lady Zitella Herbert; and her pretensions, high in intellect, accomplishments, and, from general report, great amiability of disposition; and although last mentioned," added Marian smiling, "not least in the world's estimation—an heiress."

"Heaven defend me!" returned the former laughing; "though Minerva has certainly set her stamp upon the open brow of the lovely heiress, and Beauty claims her favourite child, yet when Plutus adds his recommendations I shrink from the triumvirate; to the two former I accord my plaudits,

plaudits, but from the latter I withdraw, even with a feeling of dismay. An *heiress* is of all beings the most insupportable; from her cradle the pampered child of adulation, she is so perfectly convinced of her claims upon society, by the adventitious gifts of nature, that she necessarily becomes careless of those which would stamp her superiority upon reflective minds, such as would view accidental recommendations with apathy, while they appreciated, with energetic fervour, her immediate personal, or rather mental qualifications."

"Well, but, my good friend," returned Marian, "surely you would not be so unjust as to condemn Lady Zitella Herbert, merely because she is an heiress?"

"Why no," he returned in the same playful tone, "that would be unjust indeed, as you observe; and yet so great is my abhorrence of the appellation, that the favour I so recently solicited, I as unequivocally reject; I should not do her justice;

I have

I have a prejudice, as unwarrantable as it is strong, and you must permit me to decline the intended honour. I should view her perfections with jaundiced eyes; I should convert all her amiability into traps spread for the purposes of enthralment; I should do injustice to her very virtues, by viewing them with perverted optics; and I had better avoid self-reproach, than the philippics of others."

"You are right, Mr. Molesworth," returned the somewhat rough voice of an elderly austere gentleman; "I could never discover any good reason for giving a woman more than sufficient to maintain her station, in that meridian in which Providence has placed her; she has been an erring and frail tenant of clay, since the days of Adam. Vanity has been, and ever will be, the ruling passion of them all; while youth and beauty last, the seductive voice of man will foster the pernicious plant, until it flourish beyond the pruning hand of the skilful weeder. Grey hairs, however,

however, and palsied limbs, in time, produce their antidote, and neglect from the male world, with the rising charms of the female juveniles, restore them to their proper sphere eventually; but for an *heiress*, she is a nuisance in society—a sort of excrescence upon the tree of human life; for she will, under every badge of nature's sometimes niggard boons, be still the idol of her sphere; she alone possesses the *elixir vitæ;* and if she believes her adulators, and who will have taught her to doubt them? will "flourish in immortal youth." The attributes of Minerva, Venus, and the Nine, will appertain to her, by the syren voice of flattery, let her actual pretensions be as remote as they may; and the poor misguided female, in her own estimation a goddess, will, in ceasing to be what she perhaps really was, a woman of mediocre stamp, sink even below that standard, become at once an object of derision, if not contempt, and the golden bribe to

fetter

fetter some half-starved poet, or broken hero of turf notoriety."

The crowded parties of our metropolis are peculiarly ill-adapted for animadversion, since, in the throng of many, the sight is frequently impeded by intervening objects, when the aural faculty of the individual spreads further, and receives the painful stricture, unseen by the satirist. Such was precisely the situation of Lady Zitella Herbert; and we therefore suffer imagination to supersede the weak effort of our pen to pourtray the effect produced, by these caustic observations, on the susceptible mind of our heiress.

The mirror of truth reflected the person of Zitella as superiorly lovely; and never perhaps had she appeared more so than at the present moment, when that pensive rumination the severity of the dialogue she had overheard, had awakened, had given a tender soul-subduing interest to her harmonious features.

Horton

Horton had surveyed her for several minutes with profound admiration, unheeded by the fair object, whose thoughts were all engrossed by the memory of the sentiments declared by him on whom her mind had dwelt with considerable interest, since the last letters of her respected friend Mrs. Mulgrave; suddenly, however, as if by irresistible impulse, Sir Edward gave utterance to a burst of encomium, at once energetic, delicate, and apparently from the heart; but the manner in which it was received chilled the fervour of the speaker, and he appealed to her justice from the rebuff, in terms of mortified pride and wounded feeling.

Zitella had not forgotten the worldly lesson she had received, when, upon her first interview with the Baronet, she had appeared as an humble companion, or dependent relative; and although she was neither displeased or offended in being then passed over, or rather, in the understood phraseology of the day, somewhat degraded,

degraded, in being registered "as a very modest kind of young woman," yet she also recollected his avowed opinion also was, that she stood no chance of pre-eminence in the matrimonial market, for which he supposed her destined; how then could she now reconcile his elegant, though certainly very lavish, compliment upon her personal charms, which she conceived had remained from that period to the present stationary? nor could she resist the temptation to glance at the wonderful discovery he had made through a different microscope, when in fact none existed.

The Baronet, fully aware of the inference, pled with such persuasive eloquence, as the real cause of so obvious a contradiction, that under his first impression, he had merely decided upon an exterior, where rival beauty, of a stamp superior to almost every fair competitor for its palm, was the interrogator, and whose only pretensions rested upon that possession; whereas, in regard to the present object, time, and circumstance,

circumstance, had developed fascinations of the heart and of the mind, which had obviously since influenced him.

This was language that operated more powerfully upon the mind of our orphan than any other could have done; and she felt better satisfied to owe encomium to attributes such as these, than to the always strong and powerful recommendations of face and form.

Sir Edward, therefore, upon quitting her, was better satisfied with the progress he flattered himself he had now made, than at any preceding interview, although he could not but admit the check always given to any direct professions of love he might tender, from the dread which Lady Zitella certainly felt, of being considered as trifling with evidenced affection; still, however, he was satisfied no man appeared to be more favoured; and "Hope," we are told, is "the nurse of young Desire."

The *tête-à-tête* was interrupted by the lisping Euphemia, who, extending her

snowy, gloveless hand to acknowledge the recognition of Sir Edward, exclaimed—"Dear Lady Zitella, are you not provoked, even perfectly *enragé*, with that abominable delightful Molesworth?"

"Wherefore?" replied the former, who at the moment forgetting the improbability of the circumstance, really imagined Miss Clairmond was alluding to his strictures on heiresses.

"Wherefore! now what a cold note of interrogation! why only behold him, even to this moment, with that little ideot on his arm, and devoting all his attention to the 'puppet,' as Lord Arthur Craven named her, when half the females in the room would suffer a week's penance of retirement, but to hang on the arm of such a divinity for one evening; and only remark how little he appears to regard the universal gaze—positively all his senses are absorbed in that childish Marian!"

"Oh! she is a mere *dumb-belle,*" said Horton, "heavy, inanimate, and fatiguing

to

to bear with; but a friend at court may be convenient," he added, with a significant smile.

Zitella did indeed marvel, that a mind enlightened as his had been represented to her, should take interest in the society of the apparently imbecile and childish daughter of the Ancasters; the interested motive, however, to which Horton had imputed it, she was far from considering correct, since it ill-assimilated with that noble generosity of character, depicted by the respectable friend of his youth, Colonel Fullerton; and she was rather inclined to view it as an homage paid to personal beauty, which few men are inclined to view with indifference, however puerile the mind of the possessor.

Miss Ancaster certainly, however, did not "*take*," according to modern phraseology, for the contempt of Craven had been a serious injury to her *debut*, since he almost led the taste of the *haut-ton*, and the frivolous many had not courage to dissent from

 the

the opinion of this hero of notoriety, while men of this *lassitudinarian* age are, in reality, too indolent to take the trouble of supporting conversation; they require to be amused, and not even the stimulus of beauty can at all times compensate for the exertion of the faculty of speech.

The approach of Dr. Ancaster diverted the theme of present observation, and Zitella accepted his arm, to aid her in a ramble round the crowded rooms; chance, once more, brought her near the now terrific Molesworth, to whom her attention was immediately directed by the Dean, who, suddenly turning towards her, asked if she had yet been made known to his young friend?

Zitella had no sooner given a negative, than her companion touched the arm of the gentleman in question, who, turning at the appeal, was named to her Ladyship.

"I can assure you," continued the Dean, "that such is my impression of each, that I think you worthy of a mutual

friendship;

friendship; and as you have both claims upon my consideration, and are alike novices in this crowded scene, pray suffer my recommendation to supersede *etiquette*, and meet as more than mere acquaintance."

The perfectly well-bred, though perfectly cold bow, was received by our heroine with a civility, which certainly partook of that haughtiness which a conscious superiority of her character to that she had so lately heard delineated, and applied to herself, had involuntarily produced. The trite and laconic observations upon passing objects soon therefore began to grow listless, and but for the aid of the Dean, would, ere long, have sunk into total silence; for in vain did our heiress look for the display of those mental powers she had heard so greatly extolled, and which the fine countenance before her so beautifully expressed; while on the other hand, Molesworth, true to his assertions, sought not to draw forth those *agrémens* he was taught to expect, by the *badinage*

 usually

usually resorted to, in an assembly of heterogeneous matter, such as that they now moved in; each was therefore, from circumstance, inclined to be fastidious; and if we assert that they separated without a single wish on either side to be "more than mere acquaintance," we shall not overstep the limits of truth.

Thus ended an interview so much desired on the part of Zitella, and we must confess she experienced an almost painful disappointment; nor did she fail to treasure among the "*miseries*" attached to the "*heiress*," that that circumstance appeared to have inspired injurious impressions in the breast of a man who bore so exalted a character in the opinion of the more estimable part of society; nor could she consider the suspicions as wholly unfounded, if he moved upon the principles of apparent justice, towards these members of the community, considered in a *general* point of view; since even the old gentleman's picture of the nursery of an *heiress*, the tuition and *eclat* of an *heiress*, was perhaps but

but a too natural survey of the differing stages of the life more particularly attached to those of this description, and would probably have been also that of her own individual case, had she been educated by a worldly unprincipled father, or consigned to the care of hirelings, instead of having benefited by the religious and moral precepts of an excellent though unfortunate mother, who, from experience, had known to mould another *heiress* upon a far different model to that which the *haut-ton* commonly produces; for mercenaries, to whom such are too frequently committed, anticipate the future, and by the most contemptible adulation and flattery, undermine those virtues nature may have actually bestowed, in order to secure to themselves, by unprincipled indulgence, a certain influence over the tender mind, which may, at some distant period of independence, and possession of that wealth on which they have been taught to rest, as the supreme good, reap the full reward to which they have sacrificed so precious a trust.

CHAP. XI.

"Her form was fresher than the morning rose,
When the dew wets its leaves; unstain'd and pure,
As is the lily or the mountain's snow,
The modest virtues mingled in her eyes."

Charles Moreton!

THE door of the Dean's drawing-room was opened, and Miss Ancaster joined a visitor, already seated there.

"My mother, Mr. Molesworth, has requested me to offer her apologies; but she is detained at this moment by her bookseller, in selecting some volumes, from recent publications, to complete my library; and here," added the generally timid Marian, "is the list of those I have already

already. I should like your opinion upon them; for I cannot help fancying, Mr. Molesworth, when I see you, that I meet an old acquaintance."

"An old acquaintance!" re-echoed Clarence with quickness; "what could have given rise to such an impression?" while, as he uttered the query, emotion shook his whole frame, the colour faded from his cheeks, and his lips exhibited an ashy paleness.

"Indeed, Sir, I did not mean to offend, I assure you," cried the trembling girl; "I was unconscious of a cause to produce such an effect."

"Dear Marian, forgive me; my impetuous manner has needlessly alarmed you, but it was unintentional—yet—yet—" continued he, with evident embarrassment, "you spoke of *an acquaintance*; do I then remind you of any particular person?"

"You certainly do," she resumed, with rather more composure; "but indeed, my original was very amiable, and one whom

you have no cause to shrink from a resemblance to, for dear Charles Moreton——"

"Charles Moreton!" he faintly articulated. "Ah, Marian—Marian!"

"Did you then know him? Tell me, Mr. Molesworth, did you know our dear good Charles?"

"Yes, I have *seen* him."

"Ah then, you must have loved him! Do tell me something of him, for I love his memory, and that, my father tells me, is all he can allow; and I therefore sometimes think he is dead; but whenever I have attempted to question him, he has always told me it was a painful subject, and one that he could never converse upon; and when the idea struck me that I should never see him again, I cried most bitterly; he was more angry than I ever saw him before, and he even ordered me out of the room."

"Sweet child of nature!" cried Molesworth, with unchecked emotion, "how precious are these *traits* of genuine sensibility!

bility! And did you never hear the fate of this friend of cradled infancy?"

"No," she replied, as tears started into her eyes, which were again fixed with pensive sadness upon her companion, "never to a certainty; but perhaps you can tell me—indeed you are very like him."

"It is singular," he returned, "that none but yourself have ever marked this resemblance; yes, I knew Charles Moreton well; but you have rightly guessed; he is gone—never, *never* to return!"

Marian burst into an agony of tears.—"Ah, my dear Charles, my early friend, my more than brother! How often has he left his more manly pursuits, to amuse my infant hours! How often has he seated me upon the horse before him, to indulge a childish frolic, when amusement, more suited to his advanced years, gave way to the generous wish of affording pleasure to his little playfellow, as he fondly called me——!" and she sobbed aloud.

Molesworth walked to a window.—

 "Charles

"Charles certainly regarded you with affection, for he has often spoken of you in such terms; and I," added he, with encreased energy——

But the door opened, and the servant, giving in the names of Lady Zitella Herbert and Mrs. Nugent, arrested the remainder of the sentence. Molesworth, with a passing bow, made a precipitate retreat; and the eyes of Marian yet swam in tears, as with more than usual timidity she did the honours of the house.

Mrs. Nugent, though exquisitely vulgar, was not wanting in the feelings of humanity; and as her companion clearly saw the struggles of Marian Ancaster to conceal her emotion, it was passed over as unobserved; yet the impression dwelt on the mind of the latter, for she certainly viewed the *mauvaise-honte* of this girl with some feelings of surprise, and the appearance of the separating couple created a thousand conjectures, not easily to be elucidated.

Some

Some gentlemen entered soon after, to pay their morning respects to the family, and Mrs. Ancaster appeared never more agreeable, more animated; her conversation possessed that light charm which, without straining the mind to exertion to meet its elevation, animated the auditors into reciprocal effort; light, without descending to insipid frivolity; amusing, without the affectation of vivacity; and sportively fascinating, from the elegance of correspondent manner, and the grace of pleasing delivery: but Marian sat buried in the most perfect silence, and even to remain seemed a restraint on her inclinations. Mrs. Ancaster, with playful sweetness, rallied her on her taciturnity and childish terrors; but Marian seemed rather the more depressed than encouraged by the observations of her mother; nor did they tend to render her a more animated member of the assembled circle.

CHAP. XII.

Short-sighted mortals, ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.

POPE.

* * * * * * *

A form more lovely nature never knew;
Tho' young, majestic, though majestic, mild,
Modestly gay, and delicately wild;
The rays of fancy in her features shone;
Her eyes had all the power of Beauty's zone.

HAYLEY.

A Morning's Conversation.

THE following morning Zitella devoted to passing an hour with Lady Darnford; and as, happily for all parties, Mrs. Nugent was quite as apprehensive of visiting "*the evil genius,*" as her husband was annoyed by her

her falling beneath the Satanic contempt of her whom she had rivalled, our heroine had no companion in the visit.

Upon entering the reception-room of the noble Countess, she found her surrounded by morning visitors, and among them Clarence Molesworth. Without any existing cause, the spirits of Zitella were uncommonly light; she was even more than usually animated; her heart was yet her own, and free from preference for any of her numerous admirers, notwithstanding the conscious doubts and fears that appertained to her future fate, in a compulsatory change to a matrimonial state, which, at moments, preyed heavily upon her; yet at other times, with the usual pliancy of youth, forgot itself into gaiety and happiness, regardless of all that may be on the other side the leaf of the book of fate.

An object of the most flattering attention, of the most seductive professions of lovers and of friends, there were moments when borne away by the delusive enchant-

ments

ments of a syren region, the heart of our orphan rebounded to pleasure; it was in reflection that the charm was severed, in the solitude of her own chamber, retracing the multitudinous scene through the microscope of strict and scrutinizing investigation, that she discovered the spots and blemishes, that in reality marred the light harbingers of a summer's day, the fluttering genera,

"The pageants, insects of a glittering hour."

Zitella, this morning, peculiarly shone in all the native lustre of winning grace and happy ease, animated without levity, playfully gay without childish folly, unaffectedly natural without verging on that weak *simplicity*, which may often be more justly associated with *ignorance* than *innocence*; her enlightened mind illumined the passing topics of the day; for the fair Herbert was a mere heroine of life, not of romance; and she therefore did not deem it essential to her own importance to refuse

fuse joining in the trifles of conversation, because she had talents wherewith to shine in higher intellectual intercourse; she rather wished to aid the amusement of others, than create a distinct enjoyment for herself, during the time she spent in this society; and when neither principles nor morals were injured, she could play with the frivolous, in so sweet a guise, as almost to have reconciled the sternest sage to its adoption; it was not the speech, it was the *manner* that fascinated, yet a manner too polished for *naïveté*, too dignified for simplicity, and too graceful for embarrassment, or that timidity which must throw an awkward restraint over a woodland nymph of rural love, an embarrassment most witchingly interesting to the lover, but not universally attractive to the less enslaved spectator.

In fact, our orphan was no unnatural daughter of earth, and was, *malgré* her beauty, no object exactly adapted for beatification; indeed, jealous of her own attractions

tions as an heiress, she felt an anxious desire to be admired for herself alone. Tell me then, ye fair, is this an unpardonable crime, or will you acquit me on the ground of similar inclination, and suffering nature to prevail, acknowledge the *Zitella* of your sex?

Even Molesworth was attracted by "*an heiress*," notwithstanding the prejudice he had imbibed to that distinction: he forgot that the appendages of wealth were hers; and his eyes, if not his lips, paid the tribute of unqualified admiration, to the talents, the beauty, the vivacity of the dazzling Herbert; he became himself animated to meet *badinage* with similar aptitude of expression; the languor of illness, the melancholy of secret anguish, was superseded by exertion, for *badinage* yielded to a more brilliant repartee, bordering on the confines of wit, neat, elegant, and refined. each seemed astonished at the unexpected talents of the other, and each appeared further stimulated by the discovery.

Seated

Seated on the same sofa, and engrossed by brilliant conversation, it had become insensibly *tête-à-tête,* which the lounging many the room presented authorized; for Lady Darnford, two days in each week, professed to hold a kind of public *levée,* where all her acquaintance might amuse themselves as they pleased, and herself indulge her wayward fancy with either, as the whim of the moment should dictate; but amid the circle immediately around that part of the room where this sofa was situated, conversation had for some time entirely ceased, unnoticed by Zitella, who had unconsciously drawn upon herself and Molesworth the general attention of a numerous auditory. No sooner, however, did she perceive the circumstance, than an eloquent blush spoke its effect, and the instantaneous silence of the lips proclaimed the *genuine* modesty of that bosom, which even vanity, and the thirst of admiration, could not lull into forgetfulness.

That

That blush, that half finished sentence, had the power of association with the heart of Clarence Molesworth, while brilliancy of address and intellectual charms bore but a link to his senses; and that blush, that half-finished sentence, rested on memory, when the dazzling and animated *heiress* was no longer eloquent.

A pause succeeded, and a sigh involuntarily burst from the breast of Molesworth—a sigh which owned another cause than what any present object could create; it was mournful and dejected, rather than acute; his fine eyes lost their brilliant fire, and the valetudinarian seemed almost overcome by the union of past exertion, and some latent painful reflection.

The Countess approached.

"I am weary of one subject: nothing has been discussed around me but the tickets for Lady Edgeworth's masquerade, which are this day issuing."

"The tickets of Lady Edgeworth for a masquerade!" involuntarily exclaimed Zitella;

tella; "your Ladyship does indeed astonish me!"

"And wherefore?" said the Countess, "if a wherefore you have to express."

"I should regret to deliver an opinion, my dear Madam, without a reason to venture on its acknowledgment; but lest you, my Lady, should still doubt, did silence give no proof of one in the present case, I must even own, that however little I consider myself qualified to pass judgment on the actions of an individual so universally respected and esteemed as Lady Edgeworth, yet I cannot forbear being surprised, that a female, of the strong feelings and strict propriety of her of whom we now speak, placed in the delicate situation of a separated wife, an exiled mother, would feel little inclination to join in such an entertainment, and still greater repugnance to fix public attention more particularly on herself, by a diversion, not sufficiently common in private houses, to pass as little remarked as any other description of party; indeed

indeed I should have even conceived, that a being, amiable in every respect as her Ladyship has been represented to me, would rather have retreated from the gay scenes of this metropolis, than under such peculiarly distressing and melancholy circumstances, be at once the promoter, as well as partaker of dissipation."

"If a few more of our sex," said the Mrs. Anson we have before mentioned, as the distinguished intimate of the Viscountess, though unknown as such to Zitella, "were to assert their own dignity, we should have less cause to complain of the other. Lord Edgeworth has withdrawn himself from his rank and station, both in a public and domestic point of view, without having assigned a single reason for so doing; he has declared his full belief of the chastity and honour of the beautiful Asiatic; and he, who ought to have been her legitimate protector, has deserted her standard, and severed all the tender claims of husband and of child! Presumptive proof proclaims

claims the source of his conduct to be either caprice, amounting to criminality, or that he is visited by insanity; in either of which cases, under existing circumstance, his hapless victim ought to be privileged to seek solace for her woe, where-ever it can be attained; and I, for one, would grant her full latitude for all, within the boundaries of chastity, and that respect which may be due *herself*."

"And I," cried Lady Darnford, "would adopt a similar plan, from a different motive; I would pursue amusement under every form, would be gay, dissipated, frivolous, any thing that would show a proud defiance of him, who, neglecting the claims of nature and of rank, wastes his joyless existence, detached from her and her pursuits, to whom he stood pledged for life; who gained her affections as the lover, and deserted her as the husband. I would evince, by these means, my abhorrence of such dereliction, and boldly resting on the staff his public avowal afforded me, would,

would, like Lady Edgeworth, proud in conscious innocence, contrast my Eastern splendour with his hermit's scallop and his *La Trappe* amusements—but as to the girl, she is no doubt fitted for a similar sphere, and worthy of the associate with whom she is destined to vegetate."

"You have mistaken me, my dear Madam," returned Zitella. "Believe me, I am no advocate for a derogation from female dignity; I should even feel contempt for the individual who, neglected by the man she loved, would solicit affection, by condescending to the slightest art, by such means unworthy of herself, if to win back the truant or guilty husband; yet still, methinks the modest virtues of a feminine bosom would shrink from becoming the object of popular curiosity, and a wounded spirit rather feel relief in the discharge of retired moral and religious duties, than in the weak resource of dissipation; but inexperienced myself, I can offer only a mere theoretical opinion, and almost

almost in this, avow dread from your Ladyship's imputation of romance; but of Miss Edgeworth, I can speak from my own observation, and as you, my Lady, profess no personal knowledge, you will perhaps be inclined to credit me, when I affirm she was certainly not born to vegetate in seclusion, for she is a flower of sweetest bloom——"

"A wild heath-blossom, I should imagine," said the Countess.

"Then, my Lady, she must be a *plain* sprig of *common* growth," said Colonel Bertie; and he repeated his observation once more, lest the wonderous wit should be undiscoverable on a first view.

"A *desert* ground for a *forced* production," retorted the former; but this military hero had one happy art in perfection, which was, never to hear ought to which he could not reply to his own satisfaction, and he had recourse, in the present instance, to his never-failing auxiliary, *la tabatière*,

tabatière, which was formed from a particle of *the impregnable rock of Gibraltar*, the form of a triumphant Britannia seated on the summit, throwing around extended chains formed of Lisbon gold, which were curiously twisted round her massy throne.

Now, in compliance with the wishes and endeavours of this young guardsman to that effect, we will blazon to the world once more, that this gentleman claimed consanguinity with the immortal Elliot, whose fame had resounded from this Spanish fortress, and the missy Colonel had deemed the best possible manner of immortalizing his own gallant claims to distinction, was by ancestral proxy, and judged, by this very *tabatière*, always to keep it within the recollection of his associates; but unfortunately the malicious Countess was not inclined to lose her victim, and therefore resumed—" Pray, my dear Colonel, is that nasal powder, at this moment, the more useful to clear the clouded

clouded brain, or the Gibraltar *rock*, to hush my noisy prattle, like a baby's lullaby, in chiming an old ditty of

"The great Lord's kin am I,
In true blood a warrior bold,
Who shine by deeds gone by,
Before I A B C had told."

"An *impromptu* on a snuff-box," returned the amazed Colonel; "'pon my soul, I had no idea your Ladyship would have condescended to such an office in my service."

"Truly you have reason, and I had rhyme without, therefore the Colonel and the *impromptu* are fairly met in doggrel measure;" and taking a seat by Zitella, the tormenting Countess turned the artillery of her sarcasm against the new flirtation.

Our orphan parried her raillery, with that easy grace and unstudied gaiety which evinced her unfettered heart. Conversation now became more general; and with reluctance Zitella quitted a circle,

 where

where she had experienced the most unalloyed pleasure she had derived from any source since her return to the metropolis.

Molesworth handed her to her carriage, which was ordered to take the circuit of the Park; and during that drive, he was yet, in imagination, her companion, while we must confess casual conversation had never before dwelt so retentively on the mind of our orphan, as that which had occurred in a recent *tête-à-tête*.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Here *Beaux-Esprits* in various figures lurk,
Of Jew, and Gentile, Bramin, Tartar, Turk,
HAYLEY.

The old Soldier.

DAY succeeded to day, and constant opportunities of meeting did not lessen the estimation of either Clarence or Zitella for each other. The nabob was too completely a man of the world, and too tenaciously proud, to evince publicly that jealousy, which the repeated very lavish encomiums of Mrs. Nugent, for the companion of her Indian voyage, had actually excited in an early stage of their matrimonial connexion; and soon, unconscious,

however unmerited, that he was no welcome visitor, our hero was attracted to Park-lane, far more frequently than he was himself aware, or would otherwise have wished, by the fascinations of our heiress.

Sir Edward Horton was not a suitor to be easily superseded; and Zitella was really inclined to estimate those good qualities sheco nceived he possessed, although her heart certainly did not acknowledge that decided partiality which he sought to impart; it is true, she felt sincere gratitude for his often friendly endeavours to avert and mitigate those mortifications to which she was subjected beneath the protection of Mrs. Nugent. A return of civility was considered as due for the kindness of those constant attentions, and no attachment as yet prompted her to distinguish even those of Clarence Molesworth as the more acceptable; it was tranquil pleasure, rather than fluttering emotion, which pervaded her

bosom in the presence of the latter; his approach animated, but did not agitate her; and memory dwelt on his conversation rather with softened interest, than the more tumultuous emotions of imperious love.

Often had our young heiress also encountered Gerald Lister; he assiduously followed her steps in every party; he watched her every movement, and his eyes often wandered around the spot she graced, yet studiously avoided attaching themselves to the very object they most wished to behold.

Latterly he scarcely ever had addressed her; yet, when conversing with others, she could not but remark the listening air with which he bent, even to catch the voice, when the words were undistinguishable. Reflection did not however dwell on the circumstance, for surrounded by matrimonial competitors, who were ever on the alert to pay court to "*the heiress,*" it

it was perhaps only surprising she should have ever observed the retiring, unobtrusive, but estimable Gerald.

Among the male bevy of admirers, three candidates had pretended to the hand of Lady Zitella Herbert; but the jealous orphan gave to herself no claim in the distinction, and they were each decisively and unhesitatingly rejected.

Mr. Nugent began to look grave; neither the turf hero, the pugilistic major, or the right honourable member of the *four-in-hand-club*, were regretted as unsuccessful candidates; but when the lists were entered by a high military commander, who possessed connexions of ministerial interest, to which ambition would have granted a ready link, very serious remonstrance issued from the lips of her guardian relative; the fastidious Zitella, however, shrunk from matrimonial election, and the hand, as well as heart, of the heiress, was yet neutral in the cause of Hymen. Thus rested the wheel of destiny, when the

week

week arrived, in which the masked ball of Lady Edgeworth was to be celebrated.

Mrs. Nugent had ,selected at least a dozen characters, but the unwillingness of her husband, for her appearance in either, had been submitted to with great good-humour, although it was obvious to all but herself, that he dreaded the display of manner, when the face, that assemblage of beauty, would, by being covered with a mask, no longer diverting the attention, or subduing the shaft of satire, leave the mind open to appreciate her real standard.

"Well then," exclaimed Fanny, with really exhausted patience, "I will go in my own natural character, and I will be a pig-driver; you can't find fault with that, you know, Hubby."

"Why, yes, my dear," he answered with a deep sigh, "I do indeed find fault with it; but I'll tell you what will answer as well, and meet the views of both—you shall be a country girl, and that lovely form

may then receive all the aid of nature's gifts, and suffer no concealment, in the dress of a *paysanne.*"

The proposal was readily accepted, and Zitella declared her intention of appearing as Beatrice; while Nugent decided upon that of a Spanish grandee.

Preparations were soon commenced, and almost as soon executed; and the long-expected evening arrived, they repaired to the house of the Viscountess.

Even our heroine, accustomed to the region of metropolitan grandeur, was dazzled by the splendour of decorations this sumptuous mansion presented; all bore Asiatic stamp, an almost regal state, a luxurious magnificence, that distanced rivalry; Zitella sighed as she contemplated the grandeur of the scenery; all the fairy visions of Arabian tradition seemed realized in the magical efforts of art, genius, and taste, which met the view in the superb ornaments, devices, and illuminations of the gilded dwelling.

She

She mentally contrasted it with the present melancholy abode of the once happy exulting lord of this costly fabric; her heart sickened at the recollection; how vague and uncertain were the blessings attached to rank and wealth! for as she surveyed the lovely presiding divinity, who unmasked received her guests in a spacious apartment, she traced the ravages of corroding gloomy reflection, in her fine expressive countenance.

Having passed through the first ceremonial of *entré*, Mrs. Nugent, with eager expectation, and delighted wondering gaze at the diversified and strangely clad groupe, hastily passed on, and proceeded to that where the dancers were collecting.

"Take a bite of my gingerbread," cried young Wronghead, advancing to the country girl, and presenting a piece of the best spiced.

"Go, you rude creature," cried Mrs. Nugent, "I shall not spoil my appetite for supper; besides, I don't think you have

any business here; you look much more fit for the stable."

"Lord, how you do flatter! then be I just fit for fine company, and the great folks, and this woundy smart place, pretty one, for the stabling gentry are now at the tip-top of the list; so I be all the go, and just ready for one of the four-in-hand club. I could beat the blacks all to nothing, if they would but try me; for since sister Jenny and I have got to London once more, we are grown quite genteel, for she drives John Moody on the coach-box; and yesterday I flogged eight jack asses, harnessed to my curricle, twice up and down Bond-street."

"An idea that," repeated a meagre tall figure, with a book in his hand, on which he was alternately scribbling and looking around on the groupe "eight asses to add to my list of *dramatis personæ*—assist the sale, past a doubt—donkeys all the rage—drive them to the purpose to the literary market——"

"What

"What is that literary matter whereon you descant?" exclaimed a morose-looking mask, in a snuff-coloured coat and bob wig.

"I am the auctioneer of the sciences, review all books that come to the critical hammer, set them up at prime cost, and knock them down in a moment."

"Mercy, mercy! good Mr. Critic!" obsequiously bowed the former; "you realize the fable of the boy and the frogs; your sport is cruel death to a poor half-starved devil, who travels from Grub-street to Paternoster-row, with all his worldly wealth in his pocket. Brains, brains, my dear fellow, is my only commodity, and the parent who produces all the necessaries of life."

"Then you must not fear a large family."

"No, your sect drains the golden fountain, and locks the iron gate which leads to it. Reviews serve to answer every purpose of information, and thus stop the general trade of authorship; at least, they convey

enough

enough for *our western* world; and when a rusty-coated poverty-struck scribbler has spun his intellects to a cobweb to catch a money-spider, and wound round and round, line upon line, from a scarcely distinguishable thread, the merciless critic cuts it up with a single word, the money-spider escapes, and the sum total of the labour of many weary months is reduced into an estimate of as many minutes. A half-crown pamphlet contains all the literary heads, cropt in fashionable style, with opinions ready for retail—a cheap way of gaining wisdom."

"Who talks of fashion?" cried a bearded sage, whose scythe proclaimed his unwelcome mission—"I mow down pigmies by the hundred, and they are heard of no more."

"And who cares for Time in the modish world?" returned an old soldier; "they annihilate you without mercy, and rejoice in your very destruction."

"Yet I shall overtake them at last," returned

returned the grave moralizer; "I may be murdered, and yet exist!"

"Law! who thinks of moralizing at a masquerade?" exclaimed a tittering voice, which fully proclaimed the speaker to be Miss Harley; "this is an unexpected rencontre; we came here to get rid of time, I thought."

"A retort that," said the author—"do for a scrap of the heroine's conversation in my forthcoming novel; she must talk, or she is no woman; and yet, if she is voluble and flippant, she loses her distinction as an angel; and curse me if I am at all *au fait* in the language of the spheres, and yet nothing but a daughter of "*paradise*" now suits the public taste."

"In truth," said Beatrice, "our paradise *lost* is *regained,* since the Cœlebs of the age sigh for its Eve. Alas! poor Milton, how little did he dream that his sacred subject would regenerate in romance!"

"Who sports with Cœlebs? behold him here,

here, and tremble at the presence of the far-famed hero!"

"No Cœlebs will make me tremble my heart fainteth not, man troubleth i not, it laugheth them to scorn."

"Presumption," returned Cœlebs, "i unbecoming in woman; she should b meek and lowly of heart; unobtrusive retiring, and like the delicate violet, con ceal rather than offer her perfections t the public gaze."

"A moralizer! Oh, ye gods, defend m from the torment! a preaching husband i like a parrot, retailing all that he has hear from childhood, prating fine words, an lacking sense to discover that his auditor knew them before," replied Beatrice.

"I would not take thee to preach to," returned Cœlebs.

"A wise resolution," cried the former, "and politic in its maintenance; for were a Beatrice thy choice, believe me, thou wouldst remain '*Cœlebs in search of a wife*,' to the end of the chapter."

"Nay,

"Nay, if Cupid hath not spent all his quiver in satire, thou wilt quake for this shortly, when thy Benedict appears on the stage."

"Then he must come in masquerade indeed," she replied; "for I would have something more than earthly to please my wayward fancy. I bear a charmed heart, that none of mortal born can harm."

"Take Variety, sweet lady," said a figure, whose grotesque garb could not conceal the all-commanding person of Lord Arthur Craven. "Behold him here! a compound of diversities, and in himself nothing; of course not material, therefore not a mere earthly produce."

"Nay, this suits not my inclination; he who varies must needs be inconstant, and he who is inconstant is no man to gain the heart of Beatrice; *you* would be '*a vane blown by all winds,*' and good Mr. Cœlebs '*a block moved by none.*'"

"Some Cupids kill with arrows, some with

with *traps*," said the old soldier emphatically.

"It is a silly bird, then, who would be so caught," retorted Beatrice.

"And yet many a *golden*-crested songster has been caged by *stratagem*," returned the veteran.

Zitella sighed; there was a marked manner in the observations of this mask, which forcibly struck her; but again smiling at what she conceived could only be the effect of her own imagination, she resumed in character—"The spirit would yet peck its way through the wires; it would neither bill nor coo; for verily I am not to be tamed, but warble my 'wood-notes wild,' take wing in free unfettered air, laughing to scorn all your Cupids, arrows, and traps."

"Only till Benedict appears love's chorister, lady, and then thou wilt '*suffer love against thy will*.'"

"Let me play the part," said the author;

"who

"who so proper? I can write sonnets upon nothing, lamentations to my 'Lady Disdain,' give the sorrows of a sigh a 'local habitation and a name,' and pen volumes of '*miseries*' at command."

"I doubt not the performance of a woeful ditty, since mayhap it is fitting to your talents, poor man; nay, you are not the first poet who has been wretched to shew he has wit; and yet wretched wit is a sorry thing; therefore I'll have none on't, so am I safe from a poetic Benedict."

"And yet beware, fair Beatrice, of a *masked battery!*" cried the old soldier, leaning over his crutch, the more closely to gain her ear.

"Being associated with one at this moment," she replied, "surely I am safe from danger of its effects?"

"When the alarm drum beats," returned the former, "none but a raw recruit would feel security, and that would only arise from his ignorance."

"Ar.

"Am I then, thou man of war, to consider thee as the drum, and myself as the recruit?"

"It might benefit thee, perhaps, if thou didst."

"Under what form am I to descry the enemy?"

"He comes in *ambush,*" returned the soldier, "and the rifle is aimed at thy heart."

Beatrice started, and involuntarily suffered the mask to draw her aside from the groupe, as he emphatically added—"Thy wordly Benedict *wagers* upon thy affections; are they to be *sported* with, fair nymph? or may a son of Mars warn thee against a votary of Plutus? I am a volunteer spy in the camp of love, and am therefore entitled to the attribute of Argus."

"And where wouldst thou point my scrutiny?" she returned.

"To the *bloody hand* which hangs over thy destiny," replied the soldier.

"Gracious

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Monthly Review, Sep. 1809.

"Gracious Heaven! what secret meaning lurks beneath thy extraordinary warning?"

"Much and of import! look well to the Baronet, Sir Edward Horton; be not *wagered* out of thy affections; be guarded, lest thou be induced to capitulate to a commander, who will not bear his victory with generosity." And so saying, he suddenly disappeared in the crowd, leaving the astonished Zitella to comment on his extraordinary, though unintelligible, hint of a wager.

END OF VOL. II.

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